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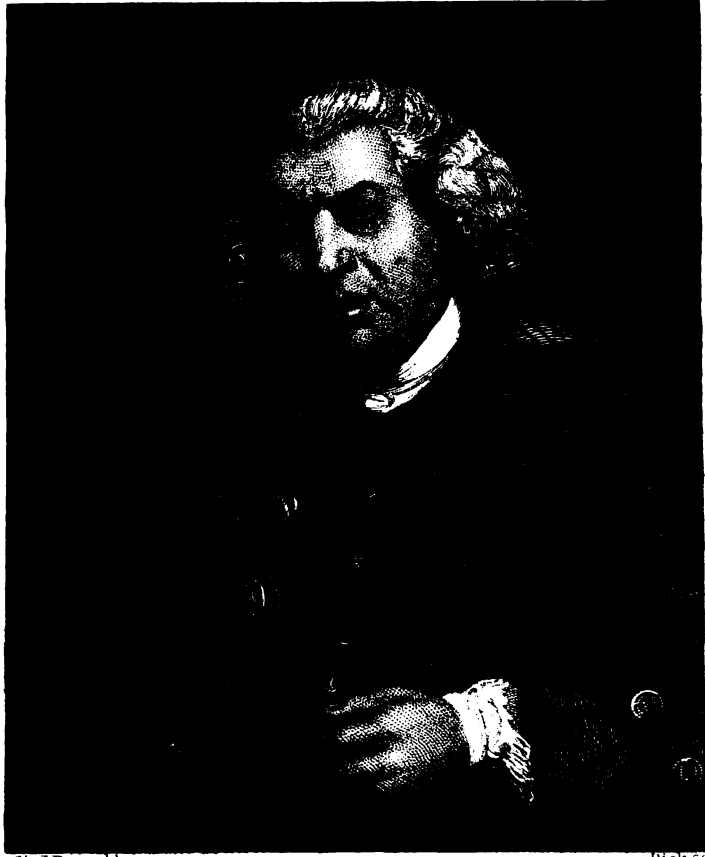
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Sir J. Reynolds

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Life and writings

Samuel Johnson, William Page

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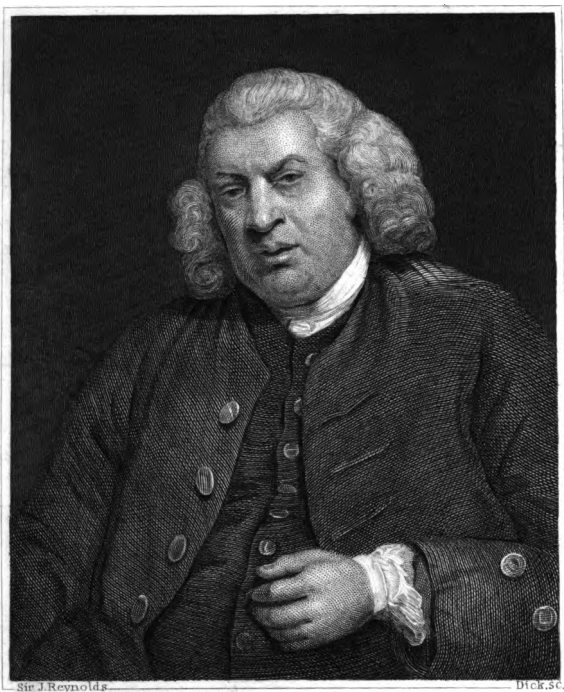
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JOHNSON.

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THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
SAMUEL JOHNSON. LL.D.

SELECTED AND ARRANGED
BY
REV. WILLIAM P. PAGE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

NEW YORK:
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1860.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

JOHNSON has been styled "the giant of English literature;" and, considering the vast extent and variety of his erudition, the brilliancy and solidity of his genius, and his singular power and elegance as a writer, this title of pre-eminence would seem justly to belong to him. He is likewise familiarly known under the appellation of "the great English moralist:" a still more illustrious distinction; inasmuch as it is not only expressive of his intellectual superiority, but of his devotedness and success as the champion of truth and virtue. It is principally in this latter character, as the uncompromising foe of all that is vicious and wrong, and the zealous and able advocate of whatever is pure in morals or sacred in religion, that the Essays here offered to the public will be found to present their author.

From such a writer as Johnson, whose productions are so various, and all distinguished by just and profound thought, and polished to the highest point of elegance in diction, it is a task of no small

difficulty to select. But as, in the formation of these volumes, a definite object was proposed, viz., to embody in them, from the works of this celebrated author, whatever might appear to be most valuable in relation to moral conduct, and the due regulation of the heart and life, a principle of choice was thereby afforded, which, while it guided and rendered more easy the labour of selection, will be found, we trust, not to have been without its use in giving a higher character and interest to the whole. Notwithstanding the great variety of topics here introduced, the reader will discover that there is a uniform and consistent design throughout; inasmuch as all these topics concentrate in a single object—the *moral amendment of the heart*. It has been remarked by one of our author's biographers, that "a complete ethical code might be formed from his writings." There is, indeed, scarcely a subject in morals on which he has not shed the pure and brilliant light of his powerful mind; while his desultory and delightfully varied manner of inculcating truth, gives to his occasional productions a vividness and interest which would be greatly diminished in a more formal and extended treatise.

For the purpose of distinguishing the different essays, and as a means for more convenient reference, the editor has considered it expedient to pre-

fix to each a short title, indicating the subject of which it treats. The reader, moreover, will perceive from this, at a single glance, the richness and the extent of the moral field which these volumes open to him.

Every one must naturally feel desirous to know something of the life and character of such a man as Dr. Johnson; and although it would consist neither with the limits of this publication nor its design, to occupy much space with these topics, still the work would manifestly be very incomplete without some notice of them. Among the various biographies of this distinguished man, the editor has selected that by Murphy, as being written by a contemporary and friend, and as giving, perhaps, the best summary "Account of his Life and Genius." This, even, to adapt it to the present purpose, it was thought necessary somewhat to abridge.

With these remarks the editor closes his task, and takes leave of the reader; trusting that his humble labours will not be wholly ineffectual in bringing somewhat more to public notice the unrivalled essays of the great English moralist.

W. P. P.

New-York, May, 1840

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LIFE AND GENIUS

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

WHEN the works of a great writer, who has bequeathed to posterity a lasting legacy, are presented to the public, it is naturally expected that some account of his life should accompany them. The reader wishes to know as much as possible of the author. The circumstances that attended him, the features of his private character, his conversation, and the means by which he rose to eminence, become the favourite objects of inquiry. Curiosity is excited; and the admirer of his works is eager to know his private opinions, his course of study, the particularities of his conduct, and, above all, whether he pursued the wisdom which he recommends, and practised the virtues which his writings inspire. A principle of gratitude is awakened in every generous mind. For the entertainment and instruction which genius and diligence have provided for the world, men of refined and sensible tempers are ready to pay their tribute of praise, and even to form a posthumous friendship with the author.

In reviewing the life of such a writer, there is, besides, a rule of justice to which the public have an undoubted claim. Fond admiration and partial friendship should not be suffered to represent his

VOL. I.—B

virtues with exaggeration; nor should malignity be allowed, under a specious disguise, to magnify mere defects, the usual failings of human nature, into vice or gross deformity. The lights and shades of the character should be given; and, if this be done with a strict regard to truth, a just estimate of Dr. Johnson will afford a lesson, perhaps, as valuable as the moral doctrine that speaks with energy in every page of his works.

The present writer enjoyed the conversation and friendship of that excellent man more than thirty years. He thought it an honour to be so connected, and to this hour he reflects on his loss with regret; but regret, he knows, has secret bribes, by which the judgment may be influenced, and partial affection may be carried beyond the bounds of truth. In the present case, however, nothing needs to be disguised, and exaggerated praise is unnecessary. It is an observation of the younger Pliny, in his Epistle to his friend Tacitus, that history ought never to magnify matters of fact, because worthy actions require nothing but the truth. This rule the present biographer promises shall guide his pen throughout the following narrative.

It may be said, the death of Dr. Johnson kept the public mind in agitation beyond all former example. No literary character ever excited so much attention; and, when the press has teemed with anecdotes, apophthegms, essays, and publications of every kind, what occasion, it may be asked, for a new tract on the same threadbare subject? The plain truth shall be the answer. The prodigious variety of foreign matter introduced into former biographies of this great man, seemed to overload his memory, and, in the account of his own life, to leave him hardly visible. It was desirable to have a more concise, and, for that reason, perhaps, a more satisfactory account, such as may exhibit a just representation of the man, and keep him the

principal figure in the foreground of his own picture. To effect that object is the design of this essay, which the writer undertakes with a trembling hand. He has no discoveries, no secret anecdotes, no occasional controversy, no sudden flashes of wit and humour, no private conversation, and no new facts, to embellish his work. Everything has been gleaned. Dr. Johnson said of himself, "I am not uncandid nor severe: I sometimes say more than I mean, in jest, and people are apt to think me serious."* The exercise of that privilege which is enjoyed by every man in society has not been allowed to him. His fame has given importance even to trifles; and the zeal of his friends has brought everything to light. What should be related and what should not, has been published without distinction. Everything that fell from him has been caught with eagerness by his admirers, who, as he says in one of his letters, have acted with the diligence of spies upon his conduct. To some of them the following lines, in Mallet's poem on Verbal-Criticism, are not inapplicable:

"Such that grave bird in northern seas is found,
Whose name a Dutchman only knows to sound;
Where'er the king of fish moves on before,
This humble friend attends from shore to shore;
With eye still earnest, and with bill inclined,
He picks up what his patron left behind,
With those choice cates his palate to regale,
And is the careful *Tibbald* of a *Whale*."

After so many essays and volumes of *Johnsoniana*, what remains for the present writer? Perhaps what has not yet been attempted; a short, yet full—a faithful, yet temperate, history of Dr. Johnson.

SAMUEL JOHNSON was born at Litchfield, September 7, 1709, O.S.† His father, Michael Johnson, was

* Boswell's Life of Johnson, vol. ii., p. 465, 4to edit.

† This appears in a note to Johnson's Diary, prefixed to the

a bookseller in that city; a man of large, athletic make, and violent passions; wrong-headed, positive, and at times afflicted with a degree of melancholy little short of madness. His mother was sister to Dr. Ford, a practising physician, and father of Cornelius Ford, generally known by the name of PARSON FORD, the same who is represented in Hogarth's *Midnight Modern Conversation*. In the life of Fenton, Johnson says that "his abilities, instead of furnishing convivial merriment to the voluptuous and dissolute, might have enabled him to excel among the virtuous and the wise." Being chaplain to the Earl of Chesterfield, he wished to attend that nobleman on his embassy to the Hague. Colley Cibber has recorded this anecdote. "You should go," said the witty peer, "if to your many vices you would add one more." "Pray, my lord, what is that?" "Hypocrisy, my dear doctor." Johnson had a younger brother named Nathaniel, who died at the age of twenty-seven or twenty-eight. Michael Johnson, the father, was chosen in the year 1718 under bailiff of Litchfield; and in the year 1725 he served the office of the senior bailiff. He had a brother of the name of Andrew, who for some years kept the ring at Smithfield appropriated to wrestlers and boxers. Our author used to say that he was never thrown or conquered. Michael, the father, died December, 1731, at the age of seventy-six; his mother at eighty-nine, of a gradual decay, in the year 1759. Of the family nothing more can be related worthy of notice. Johnson did not delight in talking of his relations. "There is little pleasure," he said to Mrs. Piozzi, "in relating the anecdotes of beggary."

Johnson derived from his parents, or from an unwholesome nurse, the distemper called the king's first of his prayers. After the alteration of the style, he kept his birthday on the 18th of September, and it is accordingly marked September 7-18.

evil. The Jacobites at that time believed in the efficacy of the royal touch; and accordingly Mrs. Johnson presented her son, when two years old, before Queen Anne, who, for the first time, performed that office, and communicated to her young patient all the healing virtue in her power. He was afterward cut for that scrofulous humour, and the under part of his face was seamed and disfigured by the operation. It is supposed that this disease deprived him of the sight of his left eye, and also impaired his hearing. At eight years old he was placed under Mr. Hawkins, at the freeschool in Litchfield, where he was not remarkable for diligence or regular application. Whatever he read, his tenacious memory made his own. In the fields with his schoolfellows, he talked more to himself than with his companions. In 1725, when he was about sixteen years old, he went on a visit to his cousin Cornelius Ford, who detained him for some months, and in the mean time assisted him in the classics. The general direction for his studies which he then received, he related to Mrs. Piozzi. "Obtain," says Ford, "some general principles of every science; he who can talk only on one subject, or act only in one department, is seldom wanted, and perhaps never wished for; while the man of general knowledge can often benefit and always please." This advice Johnson seems to have pursued with a good inclination. His reading was always desultory, seldom resting on any particular author, but rambling from one book to another, and, by hasty snatches, hoarding up a variety of knowledge. It may be proper in this place to mention another general rule laid down by Ford for Johnson's future conduct: "You will make your way the more easily in the world, as you are contented to dispute no man's claim to conversation excellence; they will, therefore, more willingly allow your pretensions as a writer." "But," says Mrs. Piozzi, "the features of peculiarity which mark a character

to all succeeding generations, are slow in coming to their growth." That ingenious lady adds, with her usual vivacity, "Can one, on such an occasion, forbear recollecting the predictions of Boileau's father, who said, stroking the head of the young satirist 'this little man has too much wit, but he will never speak ill of any one?'"

On Johnson's return from Cornelius Ford, Mr. Hunter, then master of the freeschool at Litchfield, refused to receive him again on that foundation. At this distance of time, what his reasons were it is vain to inquire; but to refuse assistance to a lad of promising genius must be pronounced harsh and illiberal. It did not, however, stop the progress of the young student's education. He was placed at another school, at Stourbridge in Worcestershire, under the care of Mr. Wentworth. Having gone through the rudiments of classic literature, he returned to his father's house, and was probably intended for the trade of a bookseller. He has been heard to say that he could bind a book. At the end of two years, being then about nineteen, he went to assist the studies of a young gentleman of the name of Corbett, to the University of Oxford; and on the 31st of October, 1728, both were entered at Pembroke College; Corbett as a gentleman-commoner, and Johnson as a commoner. The college tutor, Mr. Jordan, was a man of no genius; and Johnson, it seems, showed an early contempt of mean abilities, in one or two instances behaving with insolence to that gentleman. Of his general conduct at the university there are no particulars that merit attention, except the translation of Pope's Messiah, which was a college exercise imposed upon him as a task by Mr. Jordan. Corbett left the university in about two years, and Johnson's salary ceased. He was, by consequence, straitened in his circumstances, but he still remained at college. Mr. Jordan, the tutor, went off to a living, and was suc

seeded by Dr. Adams, who afterward became head of the college, and was esteemed through life for his learning, his talents, and his amiable character. Johnson grew more regular in his attendance. Ethics, theology, and classic literature were his favourite studies. He discovered, notwithstanding, early symptoms of that wandering disposition of mind which adhered to him to the end of his life. His reading was by fits and starts, undirected to any particular science. General philology, agreeably to his cousin Ford's advice, was the object of his ambition. He received, at that time, an early impression of piety, and a taste for the best authors, ancient and modern. It may, notwithstanding, be questioned whether, except his Bible, he ever read a book entirely through. Late in life, if any man praised a book in his presence, he was sure to ask, "Did you read it through?" If the answer was in the affirmative, he did not seem willing to believe it. He continued at the university till the want of pecuniary supplies obliged him to quit the place. He obtained, however, the assistance of a friend, and returning in a short time, was able to complete a residence of three years. The history of his exploits at Oxford, he used to say, was best known to Dr. Taylor and Dr. Adams. Wonders are told of his memory, and, indeed, all who knew him late in life can witness that he retained that faculty in the greatest vigour.

From the university Johnson returned to Litchfield. His father died soon after, December, 1731; and the whole receipt out of his effects, as appeared by a memorandum in the son's handwriting, dated 15th June, 1732, was no more than twenty pounds. In this exigence, determined that poverty should neither depress his spirit nor warp his integrity, he became under-master of a grammar-school at Market-Bosworth in Leicestershire. That resource, however, did not last long. Disgusted by the pride

of Sir Wolstan Dixie, the patron of that little seminary, he left the place in discontent, and ever after spoke of it with abhorrence. In 1733 he went on a visit to Mr. Hector, who had been his schoolfellow, and was then a surgeon at Birmingham, lodging at the house of Warren, a bookseller. At that place Johnson translated a voyage to Abyssinia, written by Jerome Lobo, a Portuguese missionary. This was the first literary work from the pen of Dr. Johnson. It contains a narrative of the endeavours of a company of missionaries to convert the people of Abyssinia to the Church of Rome. In the preface to this work Johnson observes, "that the Portuguese traveller, contrary to the general view of his countrymen, has amused his readers with no romantic absurdities or incredible fiction. He appears, by his modest and unaffected narration, to have described things as he saw them; to have copied nature from the life; and to have consulted his senses, not his imagination. He meets with no basilisks that destroy with their eyes; his crocodiles devour their prey without tears; and his cataracts fall from the rock without deafening the neighbouring inhabitants. The reader here will find no regions cursed with irremediable barrenness, or blessed with spontaneous fecundity; no perpetual gloom or unceasing sunshine; nor are the nations here described either void of all sense of humanity, or consummate in all private and social virtues; here are no Hottentots without religion, polity, or articulate language; no Chinese perfectly polite, and completely skilled in all sciences: he will discover, what will always be discovered by a diligent and impartial inquirer, that, wherever human nature is to be found, there is a mixture of vice and virtue, a contest of passion and reason; and that the Creator doth not appear partial in his distributions, but has balanced, in most countries, their particular inconveniences by particular favours." We have here an early specimen of

Johnson's manner; the vein of thinking and the frame of the sentences are manifestly his; we see the infant Hercules.

Having finished this work, he returned in February, 1734, to his native city, and in the month of August following published proposals for printing by subscription the Latin Poems of Politian, with the History of Latin Poetry from the Era of Petrarch to the Time of Politian; and also the Life of Politian, to be added by the editor, Samuel Johnson. The book to be printed in thirty octavo sheets, price five shillings. It is to be regretted that this project failed for want of encouragement. Johnson, it seems, differed from Boileau, Voltaire, and D'Alembert, who had taken upon them to proscribe all modern efforts to write with elegance in a dead language. For a decision pronounced in so high a tone, no good reason can be assigned. The interests of learning require that the diction of Greece and Rome should be cultivated with care; and he who can write a language with correctness will be most likely to understand its idiom, its grammar, and its peculiar graces of style. What man of taste would willingly forego the pleasure of reading Vida, Fracastorius, Sannazaro, Strada, and others, down to the late elegant productions of Bishop Lowth? The history which Johnson proposed to himself would, beyond all question, have been a valuable addition to the history of letters; but his project failed. His next expedient was to offer his assistance to Cave the original projector of the Gentleman's Magazine. For this purpose he sent his proposals in a letter, offering, on reasonable terms, occasionally to fill some pages with poems and inscriptions never printed before; with fugitive pieces that deserved to be revived, and critical remarks on authors, ancient and modern. Cave agreed to retain him as a correspondent and contributor to the magazine. What the conditions were cannot now be known; but

certainly they were not sufficient to hinder Johnson from casting his eyes about him in quest of other employment. Accordingly, in 1735, he made overtures to the Rev. Mr. Budworth, master of a grammar-school at Brerewood, in Staffordshire, to become his assistant. This proposition did not succeed. Mr. Budworth apprehended that the involuntary motions to which Johnson's nerves were subject, might make him an object of ridicule with his scholars, and, by consequence, lessen their respect for their master. Another mode of advancing himself presented itself about this time. Mrs. Porter, the widow of a mercer in Birmingham, admired his talents. It is said that she had about eight hundred pounds; and that sum, to a person in Johnson's circumstances, was an affluent fortune. A marriage took place; and, to turn his wife's money to the best advantage, he projected the scheme of an academy for education. Gilbert Walmsley, at that time registrar of the Ecclesiastical Court of the Bishop of Litchfield, was distinguished by his erudition and the politeness of his manners. He was the friend of Johnson, and, by his weight and influence, endeavoured to promote his interest. The celebrated Garrick, whose father, Captain Garrick, lived at Litchfield, was placed in the new seminary of education by that gentleman's advice. Garrick was then about eighteen years old. An accession of seven or eight pupils was the most that could be obtained, though notice was given by a public advertisement that at Edial, near Litchfield, in Staffordshire, young gentlemen are boarded, and taught the Latin and Greek languages, by Samuel Johnson.

The undertaking proved abortive. Johnson, having now abandoned all hopes of promoting his fortune in the country, determined to become an adventurer in the world at large. His young pupil, Garrick, had formed the same resolution; and accordingly, in March, 1737, they arrived in London

together. Two such candidates for fame, perhaps, never before that day entered the metropolis together. Their stock of money was soon exhausted. In his visionary project of an academy, Johnson had probably wasted his wife's substance; and Garrick's father had little more than his half-pay. The two fellow-travellers had the world before them, and each was to choose his road to fortune and to fame. They brought with them genius, and powers of mind peculiarly formed by nature for the different vocations to which each of them felt himself inclined. They acted from the impulse of young minds, even then meditating great things, and with courage anticipating success. Their friend Mr. Walmsley, by a letter to the Rev. Mr. Colson, who, it seems, was a great mathematician, exerted his good offices in their favour. He gave notice of their intended journey. "Davy Garrick," he said, "will be with you next week; and Johnson, to try his fate with a tragedy, and to get himself employed in some translation, either from the Latin or French. Johnson is a very good scholar and a poet, and I have great hopes will turn out a fine tragedy writer. If it should be in your way, I doubt not but you will be ready to recommend and assist your countrymen." Of Mr. Walmsley's merit, and the excellence of his character, Johnson has left a beautiful testimonial at the end of the *Life of Edward Smith*. It is reasonable to conclude, that a mathematician, absorbed in abstract speculations, was not able to find a sphere of action for two young men who were to be the architects of their own fortune. In three or four years afterward Garrick came forth, with talents that astonished the public. He began his career at Goodman's-fields. He had chosen a lucrative profession, and, consequently, soon emerged from all his difficulties. Johnson was left to toil in the humble walks of literature. A tragedy, as appears by Walmsley's letter, was the whole of his stock. This, most

probably, was IRENE; but, if then finished, it was doomed to wait for a more happy period. It was offered to Fleetwood, and rejected. Johnson looked round him for employment. Having, while he remained in the country, corresponded with Cave under a feigned name, he now thought it time to make himself known to a man whom he considered as a patron of literature. Cave had announced, by public advertisement, a prize of fifty pounds for the best poem on Life, Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell; and this circumstance diffused an idea of his liberality. Johnson became connected with him in business, and in a close and intimate acquaintance. To be engaged in the translation of some important book was still the object which he had in view. For this purpose he proposed to give the History of the Council of Trent, with copious notes, then lately added to a French edition. Twelve sheets of this work were printed, for which Johnson received forty-nine pounds, as appears by his receipt in the possession of Mr. Nichols, the compiler of that entertaining and useful work, the Gentleman's Magazine. Johnson's translation was never completed: a like design was offered to the public, under the patronage of Dr. Zachary Pearce; and, by that contention, both attempts were frustrated. Johnson had been commended by Pope for the translation of the Messiah into Latin verse; but he knew no approach to so eminent a man. With one, however, who was connected with Pope, he became acquainted at St. John's Gate; and that person was no other than the well-known Richard Savage, whose life was afterward written by Johnson with great elegance and great depth of moral reflection. Savage was a man of considerable talents. His address, his various accomplishments, and, above all, the peculiarity of his misfortunes, recommended him to Johnson's notice. They became united in the bonds of the closest intimacy. Both had great parts, and they

were equally under the pressure of want. Sympathy joined them in a league of friendship. Johnson has been often heard to relate, that he and Savage walked round Grosvenor Square till four in the morning; in the course of their conversation, reforming the world, dethroning princes, establishing new forms of government, and giving laws to the several states of Europe; till, fatigued at length with their legislative office, they began to feel the want of refreshment, but could not muster up more than fourpence halfpenny. Savage, it is true, had many vices: but vice could never strike its roots in a mind like Johnson's, seasoned early with religion and the principles of moral rectitude. His first prayer was composed in the year 1738. He had not, at that time, renounced the use of wine. The love of late hours, which followed him through life, was, perhaps, originally contracted in company with Savage. However that may be, their connexion was not of long duration. In the year 1738, Savage was reduced to the last distress. Mr. Pope, in a letter to him, expressed his concern for "the miserable withdrawing of his pension after the death of the queen;" and gave him hopes that, "in a short time, he should find himself supplied with a competence, without any dependance on those little creatures whom we are pleased to term the Great." The scheme proposed to him was, that he should retire to Swansea in Wales, and receive an allowance of fifty pounds a year, to be raised by subscription; Pope was to pay twenty pounds. This plan, though finally established, took more than a year before it was carried into execution. In the mean time, the intended retreat of Savage called to Johnson's mind the third Satire of Juvenal, in which that poet takes leave of a friend who was withdrawing himself from all the vices of Rome. Struck with this idea, he wrote that well-known poem, called London. The first lines manifestly point to Savage.

"Though grief and fondness in my breast rebel,
When injured Thales bids the town farewell;
Yet still my calmer thoughts his choice commend;
I praise the hermit, but regret the friend;
Resolved at length, from vice and London far,
To breathe in distant fields a purer air;
And fixed on Cambria's solitary shore,
Give to St. David one true Briton more."

Johnson at that time lodged at Greenwich. He there fixes the scene and takes leave of his friend; who, he says in his life, parted from him with tears in his eyes. The poem, when finished, was offered to Cave. It happened, however, that Mr. Dodsley was the purchaser, at the price of ten guineas. It was published in 1738; and Pope, we are told, said, "The author, whoever he is, will not be long concealed." Notwithstanding that prediction, it does not appear that, besides the copy-money, any advantage accrued to the author of a poem written with the elegance and energy of Pope. Johnson, in August, 1738, went, with all the fame of his poetry, to offer himself a candidate for the mastership of the school at Appleby, in Leicestershire. The statutes of the place required that the person chosen should be a master of arts. To remove this objection, the then Lord Gower was induced to write to a friend, in order to obtain for Johnson a master's degree in the University of Dublin, by the recommendation of Dr. Swift. The letter was printed in one of the magazines, and was as follows:

"SIR,

"Mr. Samuel Johnson (author of *London*, a *Satire*, and some other poetical pieces), is a native of this country, and much respected by some worthy gentlemen in the neighbourhood, who are trustees of a charity-school, now vacant, the certain salary of which is sixty pounds per year, of which they are desirous to make him master; but, unfortunately, he is not capable of receiving this bounty, which would

make him happy for life, by not being a Master of Arts, which, by the statues of the school, the master of it must be.

“ Now these gentlemen do me the honour to think that I have interest enough with you to prevail on you to write to Dean Swift, to persuade the University of Dublin to send a diploma to me, constituting this poor man master of arts in their university. They highly extol the man’s learning and probity, and will not be persuaded that the university will make any difficulty of conferring such a favour upon a stranger if he is recommended by the dean. They say he is not afraid of the strictest examination, though he is of so long a journey; and yet he will venture it if the dean thinks it necessary, choosing rather to die upon the road than to be starved to death in translating for booksellers, which has been his only subsistence for some time past.

“ I fear there is more difficulty in this affair than these good-natured gentlemen apprehend, especially as their election cannot be delayed longer than the 11th of next month. If you see this matter in the same light that it appears to me, I hope you will burn this, and pardon me for giving you so much trouble about an impracticable thing; but if you think there is a probability of obtaining the favour asked, I am sure your humanity and propensity to relieve merit in distress will incline you to serve the poor man, without my adding any more to the trouble I have already given you, than assuring you that I am, with great truth,

“ Sir,

“ Your faithful, humble servant,

“ GOWER.

“ Trentham, Aug. 1.”

This scheme miscarried. There is reason to think that Swift declined to meddle in the business; and to that circumstance Johnson’s known dislike of Swift has been often imputed.

It is mortifying to pursue a man of merit through all his difficulties; and yet this narrative must be, through many following years, the history of Genius and Virtue struggling with Adversity. Having lost the school at Appleby, Johnson was thrown back on the metropolis. Bred of no profession, without relations, friends, or interest, he was condemned to drudgery in the service of Cave, his only patron. In November, 1738, was published a translation of Crousaz's *Examen of Pope's Essay on Man*; "containing a succinct View of the System of the Fatalists, and a Confutation of their Opinions; with an Illustration of the Doctrine of Free Will, and an Inquiry, what view Mr. Pope might have in touching upon the Leibnitzian Philosophy and Fatalism. By Mr. Crousaz, Professor of Philosophy and Mathematics at Lausanne." This translation has been generally thought a production of Johnson's pen; but it is now known that Mrs. Elizabeth Carter has acknowledged it to be one of her early performances. It is certain, however, that Johnson was eager to promote the publication. He considered the foreign philosopher as a man zealous in the cause of religion; and with him he was willing to join against the system of the Fatalists and the doctrine of Leibnitz. It is well known that Warburton wrote a vindication of Mr. Pope, but there is reason to think that Johnson conceived an early prejudice against the *Essay on Man*; and what once took root in a mind like his was not easily eradicated. His letter to Cave on this subject is still extant, and may well justify Sir John Hawkins, who inferred that Johnson was the translator of Crousaz. The conclusion of the letter is remarkable. "I am yours, IMPRANSUS." If by that Latin word was meant that he had not dined because he wanted the means, who can read it, even at this hour, without an aching heart?

With a mind naturally vigorous and quickened by necessity, Johnson formed a multiplicity of pro-

jects; but most of them proved abortive. A number of small tracts issued from his pen with wonderful rapidity; such as "MARMOR NORFOLCIENSE; or an Essay on an ancient prophetic Inscription, in Monkish Rhyme, discovered at Lynn in Norfolk. By *Probus Britannicus*." This was a pamphlet against Sir Robert Walpole. According to Sir John Hawkins, a warrant was issued to apprehend the author, who retired with his wife to an obscure lodging near Lambeth Marsh, and there eluded the search of the messengers. But this story has no foundation in truth. Johnson was never known to mention such an incident in his life; and Mr. Steele caused diligent search to be made at the proper offices, and no trace of such a proceeding could be found. In the same year (1739) the lord chamberlain prohibited the representation of a tragedy, called *GUSTAVUS VASA*, by Henry Brooke. Under the mask of irony, Johnson published "A Vindication of the Licenser from the malicious and scandalous Aspersions of Mr. Brooke." Of these two pieces Sir John Hawkins says, "they have neither learning nor wit, nor a single ray of that genius which has since blazed forth;" but, as they have lately been reprinted, the reader who wishes to gratify his curiosity is referred to the fourteenth volume of Johnson's works, published by Stockdale. The lives of Boerhaave, Blake, Barratier, Father Paul, and others, were about that time printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. The subscription of fifty pounds a year for Savage was completed; and in July, 1739, Johnson parted with the companion of his midnight hours, never to see him more. The separation was, perhaps, an advantage to him, who wanted to make a right use of his time, and even then beheld with self-reproach the waste occasioned by dissipation. His abstinence from wine and strong liquors began soon after the departure of Savage. What habits he contracted in the course

of that acquaintance cannot now be known. The ambition of excelling in conversation, and that pride of victory which at times disgraced a man of Johnson's genius, were, perhaps, native blemishes. A fierce spirit of independence, even in the midst of poverty, may be seen in Savage; and, if not thence transfused by Johnson into his own manners, it may at least be supposed to have gained strength from the example before him. During that connexion there was, if we believe Sir John Hawkins, a short separation between our author and his wife; but a reconciliation soon took place. Johnson loved her, and showed his affection in various modes of gallantry, which Garrick used to render ridiculous by his mimicry. The affectation of soft and fashionable airs did not become an unwieldy figure; his admiration was received by the wife with the flutter of an antiquated coquette; and both, it is well known, furnished matter for the lively genius of Garrick.

It is a mortifying reflection, that Johnson, with a store of learning and extraordinary talents, was not able, at the age of thirty, to force his way to the favour of the public. "*Slow rises worth by poverty depressed.*" "He was still," as he says himself, "to provide for the day that was passing over him." He saw Cave involved in a state of warfare with the numerous competitors at that time struggling with the Gentleman's Magazine; and gratitude for such supplies as Johnson received, dictated a Latin Ode on the subject of that contention.

Guthrie, the historian, had, from July, 1736, composed the parliamentary speeches for the Magazine; but from the beginning of the session which opened on the 19th of November, 1740, Johnson succeeded to that department, and continued it from that time to the debate on spirituous liquors, which happened in the House of Lords in February, 1742-3. The eloquence, the force of argument, and

the splendour of language displayed in the several speeches, are well known and universally admired. The whole has been collected in two volumes by Mr. Stockdale. That Johnson was the author of the debates during that period was not generally known; but the secret transpired several years afterward, and was avowed by himself on the following occasion: Mr. Wedderburne (afterward Lord Loughborough), Dr. Johnson, Dr. Francis (the translator of Horace), the present writer, and others, dined with the late Mr. Foote. An important debate towards the end of Sir Robert Walpole's administration being mentioned, Dr. Francis observed, "That Mr. Pitt's speech on that occasion was the best he had ever read." He added, "That he had employed eight years of his life in the study of Demosthenes, and finished a translation of that celebrated orator, with all the decorations of style and language within the reach of his capacity; but he had met with nothing equal to the speech above mentioned." Many of the company remembered the debate; and some passages were cited, with the approbation and applause of all present. During the ardour of conversation Johnson remained silent. As soon as the warmth of praise subsided, he opened with these words: "That speech I wrote in a garret in Exeter-street." The company was struck with astonishment. After staring at each other in silent amaze, Dr. Francis asked how that speech could be written by him. "Sir," said Johnson, "I wrote it in Exeter-street. I never had been in the gallery of the House of Commons but once. Cave had interest with the doorkeepers. He, and the persons employed under him, gained admittance; they brought away the subject of discussion, the names of the speakers, the side they took, and the order in which they rose, together with notes of the arguments advanced in the course of the debate. The whole was afterward

communicated to me, and I composed the speeches in the form which they now have in the Parliamentary Debates." To this discovery Dr. Francis made answer: "Then, sir, you have exceeded Demosthenes himself; for to say that you have exceeded Francis's Demosthenes would be saying nothing." The rest of the company bestowed lavish encomiums on Johnson; one, in particular, praised his impartiality; observing that he dealt out reason and eloquence with an equal hand to both parties. "That is not quite true," said Johnson; "I saved appearances tolerably well; but I took care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it." The sale of the Magazine was greatly increased by the Parliamentary Debates, which were continued by Johnson till the month of March, 1742-3. From that time the Magazine was conducted by Dr. Hawkesworth.

In 1743-4, Osborne, the bookseller, who kept a shop in Gray's Inn, purchased the Earl of Oxford's library, at the price of thirteen thousand pounds. He projected a catalogue in five octavo volumes, at five shillings each. Johnson was employed in that painful drudgery. He was likewise to collect all such small tracts as were in any degree worth preserving, in order to reprint and publish the whole in a collection called "The Harleian Miscellany." The catalogue was completed: and the Miscellany, in 1749, was published in eight quarto volumes. In this business Johnson was a day-labourer for immediate subsistence, not unlike Gustavus Vasa working in the mines of Dalecarlia. What Wilcox, a bookseller of eminence in the Strand, said to Johnson on his first arrival in town, was now almost confirmed. He lent our author five guineas, and then asked him, "How do you mean to earn your livelihood in this town?" "By my literary labours," was the answer. Wilcox, staring at him, shook his head: "By your literary labours! You had better buy a porter's knot." Johnson used to

tell this anecdote to Mr. Nichols; but he said, "Wilcox was one of my best friends, and he meant well." In fact, Johnson, while employed in Gray's Inn, may be said to have carried a porter's knot. He paused occasionally to peruse the book that came to his hand. Osborne thought that such curiosity tended to nothing but delay, and objected to it with all the pride and insolence of a man who knew that he paid daily wages. In the dispute that of course ensued, Osborne, with that roughness which was natural to him, enforced his argument by giving the lie. Johnson seized a folio and knocked the bookseller down. This story has been related as an instance of Johnson's ferocity; but merit cannot always take the spurns of the unworthy with a patient spirit.*

That the history of an author must be found in his works, is in general a true observation, and was never more apparent than in the present narrative. Every era of Johnson's life is fixed by his writings. In 1744 he published the life of Savage, and then projected a new edition of Shakspeare. As a prelude to that design, he published, in 1745, "Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth, with remarks on Sir Thomas Hanmer's edition," to which were prefixed, "Proposals for a new edition of Shakspeare," with a specimen. Of this pamphlet Warburton, in the Preface to Shakspeare, has given his opinion: "As to all those things which have been published under the title of Essays, Remarks, Observations, &c., on Shakspeare, if you except some critical notes on *Macbeth*. given as a specimen of a projected edition, and written, as appears, by a man of parts and genius, the rest are absolutely below a serious notice." But the attention of the public was not excited; there was no

* Mr. Boswell says, "The simple truth I had from Johnson himself. 'Sir, he was impertinent to me, and I beat him; but it was not in his shop, it was in my own chamber.'"

friend to promote a subscription; and the project died, to revive at a future day. A new undertaking, however, was soon after proposed; namely, an English Dictionary upon an enlarged plan. Several of the most opulent booksellers had meditated a work of this kind, and the agreement was adjusted between the parties. Imboldened by this connexion, Johnson thought of a better habitation than he had hitherto known. He had lodged with his wife in courts and alleys about the Strand; but now, for the purpose of carrying on his arduous undertaking, and to be nearer his printer and friend, Mr. Strahan, he ventured to take a house in Gough Square, Fleet-street. He was told that the Earl of Chesterfield was a friend to his undertaking; and, in consequence of that intelligence, he published, in 1747, *The Plan of a Dictionary of the English Language, addressed to the Right Honourable Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield, one of his majesty's principal secretaries of state*. Mr. Whitehead, afterward poet laureat, undertook to convey the manuscript to his lordship; the consequence was an invitation from Lord Chesterfield to the author. A stronger contrast of characters could not be brought together; the nobleman, celebrated for his wit and all the graces of polite behaviour; the author, conscious of his own merit, towering in idea above all competition, versed in scholastic logic, but a stranger to the arts of polite conversation, uncouth, vehement, and vociferous. The coalition was too unnatural. Johnson expected a Mæcenas, and was disappointed. No patronage, no assistance followed. Visits were repeated, but the reception was not cordial. Johnson one day was left a full hour waiting in an antechamber till a gentleman should retire and leave his lordship at leisure. This was the famous Colley Cibber. Johnson saw him go, and, fired with indignation, rushed out of the house.* What Lord Chesterfield

* Dr. Johnson denies the whole of this story. See Boswell's Life, vol. i. p. 128. Oct. edit., 1804.—C.

thought of his visiter may be seen in a passage in one of that nobleman's letters to his son.* "There is a man whose moral character, deep learning, and superior parts I acknowledge, admire, and respect; but whom it is so impossible for me to love, that I am almost in a fever whenever I am in his company. His figure (without being deformed) seems made to disgrace or ridicule the common structure of the human body. His legs and arms are never in the position which, according to the situation of his body, they ought to be in, but constantly employed in committing acts of hostility upon the Graces. He throws anywhere but down his throat whatever he means to drink, and mangles what he means to carve. Inattentive to all the regards of social life, he mistimes and misplaces everything. He disputes with heat indiscriminately, mindless of the rank, character, and situation of those with whom he disputes. Absolutely ignorant of the several gradations of familiarity and respect, he is exactly the same to his superiors, his equals, and his inferiors; and therefore, by a necessary consequence, is absurd to two of the three. Is it possible to love such a man? No. The utmost I can do for him is to consider him a respectable Hottentot." Such was the idea entertained by Lord Chesterfield. After the incident of Colley Cibber, Johnson never repeated his visits. In his high and decisive tone, he has often been heard to say, "Lord Chesterfield is a wit among lords, and a lord among wits."

In the course of the year 1747, Garrick, in conjunction with Lacy, became patentee of Drury-lane playhouse. For the opening of the theatre at the usual time, Johnson wrote for his friend the well-known prologue, which, to say no more of it, may at least be placed on a level with Pope's to the tragedy of Cato. The playhouse being now under

* Letter CCXII.

Garrick's direction, Johnson thought the opportunity fair to think of his tragedy of *Irene*, which was his whole stock on his first arrival in town in the year 1737. That play was accordingly put into rehearsal in January, 1749. As a precursor to prepare the way and to awaken the public attention, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, a poem in imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal, by the Author of *London*, was published in the same month. In the Gentleman's Magazine for February, 1749, we find that the tragedy of *Irene* was acted at Drury-lane on Monday, February the 6th, and from that time without interruption to Monday, February the 20th, being in all thirteen nights. Since that time it has not been exhibited on any stage. *Irene* may be added to some other plays in our language which have lost their place in the theatre, but continue to please in the closet. During the representation of this piece, Johnson attended every night behind the scenes. Conceiving that his character as an author required some ornament for his person, he chose upon that occasion to decorate himself with a handsome waistcoat and a gold-laced hat. The late Mr. Topham Beauclerc, who had a great deal of that humour which pleases the more for seeming undesigned, used to give a pleasant description of this greenroom finery, as related by the author himself; "But," said Johnson, with great gravity, "I soon laid aside my gold-laced hat, lest it should make me proud." The amount of the three benefit nights for the tragedy of *Irene*, it is to be feared, was not very considerable, as the profit, that stimulating motive, never invited the author to another dramatic attempt. Some years afterward, when the present writer was intimate with Garrick, and knew Johnson to be in distress, he asked the manager why he did not produce another tragedy for his Litchfield friend. Garrick's answer was remarkable: "When Johnson writes *tragedy*, *declamation roars* and *passion sleeps*."

when Shakspeare wrote, he dipped his pen in his own heart."

There may, perhaps, be a degree of sameness in this regular way of tracing an author from one work to another, and the reader may feel the effect of a tedious monotony; but in the life of Johnson there are no other landmarks. He was now forty years old, and had mixed but little with the world. He followed no profession, transacted no business, and was a stranger to what is called a town life. We are now arrived at the brightest period he had hitherto known. His name broke out upon mankind with a degree of lustre that promised a triumph over all his difficulties. The *Life of Savage* was admired as a beautiful and instructive piece of biography. The two imitations of Juvenal were thought to rival even the excellence of Pope; and the tragedy of *Irene*, though uninteresting on the stage, was universally admired in the closet for the propriety of the sentiments, the richness of the language, and the general harmony of the whole composition. His fame was widely diffused; and he had made his agreement with the booksellers for his *English Dictionary* at the sum of fifteen hundred guineas; a part of which was to be from time to time advanced, in proportion to the progress of the work. This was a certain fund for his support, without being obliged to write fugitive pieces for the petty supplies of the day. Accordingly, we find that, in 1749, he established a club, consisting of ten in number, at Horseman's, in Ivy-lane, on every Tuesday evening. This is the first scene of social life to which Johnson can be traced out of his own house. The members of this little society were Samuel Johnson, Dr. Salter, Dr. Hawkesworth, Mr. Ryland, a merchant, Mr. Payne, a bookseller in Paternoster-row, Mr. Samuel Dyer, a learned young man, Dr. Wm. M'Ghie, a Scotch physician, Dr. Edmund Barker, a young physician; Dr. Bath-

urst, another young physician, and Sir John Hawkins. This list is given by Sir John, as it should seem, with no other view than to draw a spiteful and malevolent character of almost every one of them. Mr. Dyer, whom Sir John says he loved with the affection of a brother, meets with the harshest treatment, because it was his maxim, that *to live in peace with mankind, and in a temper to do good offices, was the most essential part of our duty.* That notion of moral goodness gave umbrage to Sir John Hawkins, and drew upon the memory of his friend the bitterest imputations. Mr. Dyer, however, was admired and loved through life. He was a man of literature. Johnson loved to enter with him into a discussion of metaphysical, moral, and critical subjects; in those conflicts exercising his talents, according to his custom, always contending for victory. Dr. Bathurst was the person on whom Johnson fixed his affection. He hardly ever spoke of him without tears in his eyes. It was from him, who was a native of Jamaica, that Johnson received into his service Frank,* the black servant whom, on account of his master, he valued to the end of his life. At the time of instituting the club in Ivy-lane, Johnson had projected the *Rambler*. The title was most probably suggested by the *Wanderer*, a poem which he mentions with the warmest praise in the *Life of Savage*. With the same spirit of independence with which he wished to live, it was now his pride to write. He communicated his plan to none of his friends; he desired no assistance, relying entirely on his own fund and the protection of the Divine Being, which he implored in a solemn form of prayer composed by himself for the occasion. Having formed a resolution to undertake a work that might be of use and honour to his country, he thought, with Milton, that this was not to

* See *Gent. Mag.*, vol. lxxi., p. 190.

be obtained "but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit that can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and send out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases."

Having invoked the special protection of Heaven, and by that act of piety fortified his mind, he began the great work of the *Rambler*.* The first number was published on Tuesday, March the 20th, 1750 and from that time was continued regularly every Tuesday and Saturday, for the space of two years, when it finally closed on Saturday, March 14, 1752. As it began with motives of piety, so it appears that the same religious spirit glowed with unabating ardour to the last. His conclusion is: "The Essays professedly serious, if I have been able to execute my own intentions, will be found exactly conformable to the precepts of Christianity, without any accommodation to the licentiousness and levity of the present age. I therefore look back on this part of my work with pleasure, which no man shall diminish or augment. I shall never envy the honours which wit and learning obtain in any other cause, if I can be numbered among the writers who have given ardour to virtue and confidence to truth." The whole number of essays amounted to two hundred and eight. Addison's, in the *Spectator*, are more in number, but not half in point of quantity. Addison was not bound to publish on stated days; he could watch the ebb and flow of his genius, and send his paper to the press when his own taste was

* In the volume of devotions published after his death, is the form of prayer which he used on this occasion, as follows: "Almighty God, the giver of all good things, without whose help all labour is ineffectual, and without whose grace all wisdom is folly; grant, I beseech thee, that in this my undertaking, thy HOLY SPIRIT may not be withheld from me, but that I may promote thy glory, and the salvation both of myself and others. grant this, oh Lord, for the sake of JESUS CHRIST. Amen."

satisfied. Johnson's case was very different. He wrote singly and alone. In the whole progress of the work he did not receive more than ten essays. This was a scanty contribution. For the rest, the author has described his situation. "He that condemns himself to compose on a stated day, will often bring to his task an attention dissipated, a memory embarrassed, an imagination overwhelmed, a mind distracted with anxieties, a body languishing with disease; he will labour on a barren topic till it is too late to change it; or, in the ardour of invention, diffuse his thoughts into wild exuberance, which the pressing hour of publication cannot suffer judgment to examine or reduce." Of this excellent production, the number sold on each day did not amount to five hundred; of course the bookseller, who paid the author four guineas a week, did not carry on a successful trade. His generosity and perseverance deserve to be commended; and happily, when the collection appeared in volumes, were amply rewarded. Johnson lived to see his labours flourish in a tenth edition. His posterity, as an ingenious French writer has said on a similar occasion, began in his lifetime.

In the beginning of 1750, soon after the Rambler was set on foot, Johnson was induced, by the arts of a vile impostor, to lend his assistance, during a temporary delusion, to a fraud not to be paralleled in the annals of literature.* One Lauder, a native of Scotland, who had been a teacher in the University of Edinburgh, had conceived a mortal antipathy to the name and character of Milton. His reason was, because the prayer of Pamela, in Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, was, as he supposed, maliciously inserted by the great poet in an edition of the *Eikon Basilike*, in order to fix an imputation of impiety on

* It has since been paralleled, in the case of the Shakspeare MSS., by a yet more vile impostor.

the memory of the murdered king. Fired with resentment, and willing to reap the profits of a gross imposition, this man collected from several Latin poets, such as Masenius the Jesuit, Staphorstius a Dutch divine, Beza, and others, all such passages as bore any kind of resemblance to different places in the *Paradise Lost*; and these he published from time to time in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, with occasional interpolations of lines which he himself translated from Milton. The public credulity swallowed all with eagerness; and Milton was supposed to be guilty of plagiarism from inferior modern writers. The fraud succeeded so well, that Lauder collected the whole into a volume, and advertised it under the title of "*An Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns, in his Paradise Lost; dedicated to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.*" While the book was in the press, the proof-sheets were shown to Johnson at the Ivy-lane club, by Payne, the bookseller, who was one of the members. No man in the society was in possession of the authors from whom Lauder professed to make his extracts. That charge was believed, and the contriver of it found his way to Johnson; who is represented by Sir John Hawkins, not indeed as an accomplice in the fraud, but, through motives of malignity to Milton, delighting in the detection, and exulting that the poet's reputation would suffer by the discovery. More malice to a deceased friend cannot well be imagined. Hawkins adds, "That he wished well to the argument must be inferred from the preface, which indubitably was written by him." The preface, it is well known, was written by Johnson. But, if Johnson approved of the argument, it was no longer than while he believed it founded in truth. Let us advert to his own words in that very preface. "Among the inquiries to which the ardour of criticism has naturally given occasion, none is more obscure in itself, or more

worthy of rational curiosity, than a retrospection of the progress of this mighty genius in the construction of his work; a view of the fabric gradually rising, perhaps from small beginnings, till its foundation rests in the centre, and its turrets sparkle in the skies; to trace back the structure, through all its varieties, to the simplicity of the first plan; to find what was projected, whence the scheme was taken, how it was improved, by what assistance it was executed, and from what stores the materials were collected; whether its founder dug them from the quarries of nature, or demolished other buildings to embellish his own." These were the motives that induced Johnson to assist Lauder with a preface: and are not these the motives of a critic and a scholar? What reader of taste, what man of real knowledge, would not think his time well employed in an inquiry so curious, so interesting, and instructive? If Lauder's facts were really true, who would not be glad, without the smallest tincture of malevolence, to receive real information? It is painful to be thus obliged to vindicate a man who, in his heart, towered above the petty arts of fraud and imposition, against an injudicious biographer, who undertook to be his editor and the protector of his memory. Another writer, Dr. Towers, in an Essay on the Life and Character of Dr. Johnson, seems to countenance this calumny. He says, "It can hardly be doubted but that Johnson's aversion to Milton's politics was the cause of that alacrity with which he joined with Lauder in his infamous attack on our great epic poet, and which induced him to assist in that transaction." These words would seem to describe an accomplice, were they not immediately followed by an express declaration that Johnson was *unacquainted with the imposture*. Dr. Towers adds, "It seems to have been by way of making some compensation to the memory of Milton, for the share he had in the attack of Lauder, that John-

son wrote the Prologue spoken by Garrick at Drury-Lane Theatre, 1750, on the performance of the Mask of Comus, for the benefit of Milton's granddaughter." Dr. Towers is not free from prejudice; but, as Shakspeare has it, "He begets a temperance to give it smoothness." He is therefore entitled to a dispassionate answer. When Johnson wrote the prologue, it does not appear that he was aware of the malignant artifices practised by Lauder. In the postscript to Johnson's preface, a subscription is proposed for relieving the granddaughter of the author of Paradise Lost. Dr. Towers will agree that this shows Johnson's alacrity in doing good. That alacrity showed itself again in the letter printed in the European Magazine, January, 1785, and there said to have appeared originally in the General Advertiser, 4th April, 1750, by which the public were invited to embrace the opportunity of paying a just regard to the illustrious dead, united with the pleasure of doing good to the living. The letter adds, "To assist industrious indigence, struggling with distress and debilitated by age, is a display of virtue, and an acquisition of happiness and honour. Whoever, therefore, would be thought capable of pleasure in reading the works of our incomparable Milton, and not so destitute of gratitude as to refuse to lay out a trifle, in a rational and elegant entertainment, for the benefit of his living remains, for the exercise of their own virtue, the increase of their reputation, and the consciousness of doing good, should appear at Drury-Lane Theatre tomorrow, April 5, when Comus will be performed for the benefit of Mrs. Elizabeth Foster, granddaughter to the author, and the only surviving branch of his family. *Nota bene*, there will be a new prologue on the occasion, written by the author of Irene, and spoken by Mr. Garrick." The man who had thus exercised himself to serve the granddaughter, cannot be supposed to have entertained personal

malice to the grandfather. It is true that the malevolence of Lauder, as well as the impostures of Archibald Bower, were fully detected by the labours in the cause of truth of the Rev. Dr. Douglass, the late Lord Bishop of Salisbury. But the pamphlet entitled "Milton vindicated from the charge of Plagiarism, brought against him by Mr. Lauder, and Lauder himself convicted of several Forgeries and gross Impositions on the Public, by John Douglass, M.A., Rector of Eaton Constantine, Salop," was not published till the year 1751. In that work, p. 77, Dr. Douglass says, "It is to be hoped, nay, it is *expected*, that the elegant and nervous writer, whose judicious sentiments and inimitable style point out the author of Lauder's preface and postscript, will no longer allow A MAN to *plume himself with his feathers* who appears so little to have deserved his assistance; an assistance which I am persuaded would never have been communicated, had there been the least suspicion of those facts which I have been the instrument of conveying to the world." We have here a contemporary testimony to the integrity of Dr. Johnson throughout the whole of that vile transaction. What was the consequence of the requisition made by Dr. Douglass? Johnson, whose ruling passion may be said to have been the love of truth, convinced Lauder that it would be more for his interest to make a full confession of his guilt, than to stand forth the convicted champion of a lie; and for this purpose he drew up, in the strongest terms, a recantation, in a letter to the Rev. Mr. Douglass, which Lauder signed, and published in the year 1761. That piece will remain a lasting memorial of the abhorrence with which Johnson beheld a violation of truth. Mr. Nichols, whose attachment to his illustrious friend was unwearied, showed him, in 1780, a book called "Remarks on Johnson's Life of Milton," in which the affair of Lauder was renewed with virulence. and a *poetical scale* in the

Literary Magazine, 1758 (when Johnson had ceased to write in that collection), was urged as an additional proof of deliberate malice. He read the libellous passage with attention, and instantly wrote on the margin, "In the business of Lauder I was deceived, partly by thinking the man too frantic to be fraudulent. Of the *poetical scale* quoted from the Magazine I am not the author. I fancy it was put in after I had quitted that work; for I not only did not write it, but I do not remember it." As a critic and a scholar, Johnson was willing to receive what numbers, at the time, believed to be true information: when he found that the whole was a forgery, he renounced all connexion with the author.

In March, 1752, he felt a severe stroke of affliction in the death of his wife. The last number of the Rambler, as already mentioned, was on the 14th of that month. The loss of Mrs. Johnson was then approaching, and probably was the cause that put an end to those admirable periodical essays. It appears that she died on the 28th of March: in a memorandum at the foot of his Prayers and Meditations, that is called her Dying Day. She was buried at Bromley, under the care of Dr. Hawkesworth. Johnson placed a Latin inscription on her tomb, in which he celebrated her beauty. With the singularity of his prayers for his deceased wife, from that time to the end of his days, the world is sufficiently acquainted. On Easter-day, 22d April, 1764, his memorandum says: "Thought on Tetty, poor, dear Tetty; with my eyes full. Went to church. After sermon I recommended Tetty in a prayer by herself; and my father, mother, brother, and Bathurst, in another. I did it only once, so far as it might be lawful for me." In a prayer, January 23, 1759, the day on which his mother was buried, he commends, as far as may be lawful, her soul to God, imploring for her whatever is most beneficial to her in her

present state. In this habit he persevered to the end of his days. The Rev. Mr. Strahan, the editor of the Prayers and Meditations, observes, "That Johnson, on some occasions, prays that the Almighty *may have had mercy* on his wife and Mr. Thrale, evidently supposing their sentence to have been already passed in the Divine Mind; and, by consequence, proving that he had no belief in a state of purgatory, and no reason for praying for the dead that could impeach the sincerity of his profession as a Protestant." Mr. Strahan adds, "That, in praying for the regretted tenants of the grave, Johnson conformed to a practice which has been retained by many learned members of the Established Church, though the Liturgy no longer admits it. *If where the tree falleth, there it shall be*; if our state at the close of life is to be the measure of our final sentence, then prayers for the dead, being visibly fruitless, can be regarded only as the vain oblations of superstition. But of all superstitions, this, perhaps, is one of the least unamiable, and most incident to a good mind. If our sensations of kindness be intense, those whom we have revered and loved death cannot wholly seclude from our concern. It is true, for the reason just mentioned, such evidences of our surviving affection may be thought ill-judged; but surely they are generous, and some natural tenderness is due even to a superstition which thus originates in piety and benevolence." These sentences, extracted from the Rev. Mr. Strahan's preface, if they are not a justification, are at least a beautiful apology.

Mrs. Johnson left a daughter, Lucy Porter, by her first husband. She had contracted a friendship with Mrs. Anne Williams, the daughter of Zachary Williams, a physician of eminence in South Wales, who had devoted more than thirty years of a long life to the study of the longitude, and was thought to have made great advances towards that impor-

tant discovery. His letters to Lord Halifax and the Lords of the Admiralty, partly corrected and partly written by Dr. Johnson, are still extant in the hands of Mr. Nichols.* We there find Dr. Williams, in the eighty-third year of his age, stating that he had prepared an instrument, which might be called an epitome or miniature of the terraqueous globe, showing, with the assistance of tables constructed by himself, the variations of the magnetic needle, and ascertaining the longitude for the safety of navigation. It appears that this scheme had been referred to Sir Isaac Newton: but that great philosopher excusing himself on account of his advanced age, all applications were useless till 1751, when the subject was referred, by order of Lord Anson, to Dr. Bradley, the celebrated professor of astronomy. His report was unfavourable,† though it allows that a considerable progress had been made. Dr. Williams, after all his labour and expense, died in a short time after, a melancholy instance of unrewarded merit. His daughter possessed uncommon talents, and, though blind, had an alacrity of mind that made her conversation agreeable and even desirable. To relieve and appease melancholy reflections, Johnson took her home to his house in Gough Square. In 1755, Garrick gave her a benefit-play, which produced two hundred pounds. In 1766, she published by subscription a quarto volume of Miscellanies, and increased her little stock to three hundred pounds. That fund, with Johnson's protection, supported her through the remainder of her life.

During the two years in which the Rambler was carried on, the Dictionary proceeded by slow degrees. In May, 1752, having composed a prayer preparatory to his return from tears and sorrow to

* See Gentleman's Magazine for Nov. and Dec., 1787

† See Gentleman's Magazine for 1787, p. 1042.

the duties of life, he resumed his grand design, and went on with vigour, giving, however, occasional assistance to his friend Dr. Hawkesworth in the *Adventurer*, which began soon after the *Rambler* was laid aside. Some of the most valuable essays in that collection were from the pen of Johnson. The Dictionary was completed towards the end of 1754; and Cave being then no more, it was a mortification to the author of that noble addition to our language that his old friend did not live to see the triumph of his labours. In May, 1755, that great work was published. Johnson was desirous that it should come from one who had obtained academical honours; and for that purpose his friend, the Rev. Thomas Wharton, obtained for him, in the preceding month of February, a diploma for a master's degree from the University of Oxford. Garrick, on the publication of the Dictionary, wrote the following lines:

"Talk of war with a Briton, he'll boldly advance,
That one English soldier can beat ten of France;
Would we alter the boast, from the sword to the pen,
Our odds are still greater, still greater our men.
In the deep mines of science, though Frenchmen may toil,
Can their strength be compared to Locke, Newton, or Boyle?
Let them rally their heroes, send forth all their powers,
Their versemen and prosemen, then match them with ours.
First Shakspeare and Milton, like gods in the fight,
Have put their whole drama and epic to flight.
In satires, epistles, and odes would they cope?
Their numbers retreat before Dryden and Pope.
And Johnson well arm'd, like a hero of yore,
Has beat forty French, and will beat forty more."

It is, perhaps, needless to mention, that forty was the number of the French academy at the time when their Dictionary was published to settle their language.

In the course of the winter preceding this grand publication, the late Earl of Chesterfield gave two essays in the periodical paper called *The World*,

dated November 28, and December 5, 1754, to prepare the public for so important a work. The original plan, addressed to his lordship in the year 1747, is there mentioned in terms of the highest praise; and this was understood, at the time, to be a courtly way of soliciting a dedication of the Dictionary to himself. Johnson treated this civility with disdain. He said to Garrick and others, "I have sailed a long and painful voyage round the world of the English language, and does he now send out two cockboats to tow me into harbour?" He had said, in the last number of the Rambler, that "having laboured to maintain the dignity of virtue, I will not now degrade it by the meanness of dedication." Such a man, when he had finished his Dictionary, "not," as he says himself, "in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academic bowers, but amid inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow, and without the patronage of the great," was not likely to be caught by the lure thrown out by Lord Chesterfield. He had in vain sought the patronage of that nobleman; and his pride, exasperated by disappointment, drew from him the following letter, dated in the month of February, 1755.

"To the Right Hon. the Earl of Chesterfield.

"MY LORD,

"I have been lately informed, by the proprietors of *The World*, that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your lordship. To be so distinguished is an honour which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive or in what terms to acknowledge.

"When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address. I should not forbear to wish that I might

boast myself *le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*; that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending. But I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

"Seven years, my lord, have now passed since I waited in your outward room, or was repulsed from your door, during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

"The Shepherd in Virgil grew acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

"Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind: but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received; or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

"Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed, though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long

wakened from that dream of hope in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation.

“My lord, your lordship’s most humble

“And most obedient servant,

“SAMUEL JOHNSON.”

It is said, upon good authority, that Johnson once received from Lord Chesterfield the sum of ten pounds. It were to be wished that the secret had never transpired. It was mean to receive it, and meaner to give it. It may be imagined, that for Johnson’s ferocity, as it has been called, there was some foundation in his finances; and, as his Dictionary was brought to a conclusion, that money was now to flow in upon him. The reverse was the case. For his subsistence during the progress of the work, he had received at different times the amount of his contract; and when his receipts were produced to him at a tavern dinner, given by the booksellers, it appeared that he had been paid a hundred pounds and upward more than his due. The author of a book called *Lexiphanes*, written by a Mr. Campbell, a Scotchman, and purser of a man-of-war, endeavoured to blast his laurels, but in vain. The world applauded, and Johnson never replied. “Abuse,” he said, “is often of service: there is nothing so dangerous to an author as silence; his name, like a shuttlecock, must be beat backward and forward, or it falls to the ground.” *Lexiphanes* professed to be an imitation of the pleasant manner of Lucian; but humour was not the talent of the writer of *Lexiphanes*. As Dryden says, “He had too much horse-play in his raillery.”

It was in the summer of 1754 that the present writer became acquainted with Dr. Johnson. The cause of his first visit is related by Mrs. Piozzi nearly in the following manner: “Mr. Murphy being engaged in a periodical paper, the *Gray’s-Inn Journal*, was at a friend’s house in the country, and,

not being disposed to lose pleasure for business, wished to content his bookseller by some unstudied essay. He therefore took up a French *Journal Littéraire*, and, translating something he liked, sent it away to town. Time, however, discovered that he translated from the French a Rambler, which had been taken from the English without acknowledgment. Upon this discovery Mr. Murphy thought it right to make his excuses to Dr. Johnson. He went next day, and found him covered with soot like a chimney-sweeper, in a little room, as if he had been acting Lungs in the Alchymist, *making ether*. This being told by Mr. Murphy in company, 'Come, come,' said Dr. Johnson, 'the story is black enough; but it was a happy day that brought you first to my house.'" After this first visit, the author of this narrative by degrees grew intimate with Dr. Johnson. The first striking sentence that he heard from him was in a few days after the publication of Lord Bolingbroke's posthumous works. Mr. Garrick asked him "if he had seen them." "Yes, I have seen them." "What do you think of them?" "Think of them!" He made a long pause, and then replied: "Think of them! A scoundrel and a coward! A scoundrel, who spent his life in charging a gun against Christianity; and a coward, who was afraid of hearing the report of his own gun, but left half a crown to a hungry Scotchman to draw the trigger after his death." His mind, at this time strained and over-laboured by constant exertion, called for an interval of repose and indolence. But indolence was the time of danger; it was then that his spirits, not employed abroad, turned with inward hostility against himself. His reflections on his own life and conduct were always severe: and, wishing to be immaculate, he destroyed his own peace by unnecessary scruples. He tells us, that when he surveyed his past life, he discovered nothing but a barren waste of time, with

some disorders of body and disturbances of mind very near to madness. His life, he says, from his earliest youth, was wasted in a morning bed; and his reigning sin was a general sluggishness, to which he was always inclined, and in part of his life almost compelled, by morbid melancholy and weariness of mind. This was his constitutional malady, derived perhaps from his father, who was at times overcast with a gloom that bordered on insanity. When to this it is added that Johnson, about the age of twenty, drew up a description of his infirmities for Dr. Swinfen, at that time an eminent physician in Staffordshire, and received an answer to his letter, importing that the symptoms indicated a future privation of reason, who can wonder that he was troubled with melancholy and dejection of spirit? An apprehension of the worst calamity that can befall human nature hung over him all the rest of his life, like the sword of the tyrant suspended over his guest. In his sixtieth year he had a mind to write the history of his melancholy; but he desisted, not knowing whether it would not too much disturb him. In a Latin poem, however, to which he has prefixed as a title, *Know Thyself*, he has left a picture of himself, drawn with as much truth and as firm a hand as can be seen in the portraits of Hogarth or Sir Joshua Reynolds. It is hoped that a translation, or, rather, imitation of so curious a piece will not be improper in this place.

KNOW THYSELF.

(AFTER REVISING AND ENLARGING THE ENGLISH LEXICON OR DICTIONARY.)

WHEN Scaliger, whole years of labour past,
Beheld his Lexicon complete at last,
And weary of his task, with wond'ring eyes,
Saw from words piled on words a fabric rise,
He cursed the industry, inertly strong,
In creeping toil that could persist so long,

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And if, enraged he cried, Heaven meant to shed
 Its keenest vengeance on the guilty head,
 The drudgery of words the damn'd would know,
 Doom'd to write Lexicons in endless wo.*

Yes, you had cause, great genius, to repent;
 "You lost good days that might be better spent;"
 You well might grudge the hours of ling'ring pain,
 And view your learned labours with disdain.
 To you were given the large, expanded mind,
 The flame of genius, and the taste refined;
 Mid rolling worlds the Great First Cause explore;
 To fix the eras of recorded time,
 And live in every age and every clime;
 Record the chiefs who propp'd their country's cause
 Who founded empires, and established laws;
 To learn whate'er the sage, with virtue fraught,
 Whate'er the Muse of moral wisdom taught.
 These were your quarry: these to you were known,
 And the world's ample volume was your own.

Yet warn'd by me, ye pigmy wits, beware,
 Nor with immortal Scaliger compare.
 For me, though his example strike my view,
 Oh! not for me his footsteps to pursue.
 Whether first Nature, unpropitious, cold,
 This clay compounded in a ruder mould;
 Or the slow current loitering at my heart,
 No gleam of wit or fancy can impart;
 Whate'er the cause, from me no numbers flow
 No visions warm me, and no raptures glow.
 A mind like Scaliger's, superior still,
 No grief could conquer, no misfortunes chill.
 Though for the maze of words his native skies
 He seem'd to quit, 'twas but again to rise;
 To mount once more to the bright source of day,
 And view the wonders of th' ethereal way.
 The love of fame his generous bosom fired;
 Each science hail'd him, and each muse inspired.
 For him the sons of learning trimm'd the bays,
 And nations grew harmonious in his praise.

My task perform'd, and all my labours o'er,
 For me what lot has Fortune now in store?
 The listless will succeeds, that worst disease,
 The rack of indolence, the sluggish ease.

* See Scaliger's Epigram on this subject, communicated without doubt
 by Dr. Johnson, *Gent. Mag.*, 1748, p. 8.

Care grows on care, and o'er my aching brain
 Black melancholy pours her morbid train.
 No kind relief, no lenitive at hand,
 I seek at midnight clubs the social band.
 But midnight clubs, where wit with noise conspires,
 Where *Comus* revels, and where wine inspires,
 Delight no more : I seek my lonely bed,
 And call on sleep to sooth my languid head.
 But sleep from these sad lids flies far away ;
 I mourn all night, and dread the coming day.
 Exhausted, tired, I throw my eyes around,
 To find some vacant spot on classic ground ;
 And soon, vain hope ! I form a grand design ;
 Languor succeeds, and all my powers decline.
 If science open not her richest vein,
 Without materials all our toil is vain.
 A forin to rugged stone when *Phidias* gives,
 Beneath his touch a new creation lives.
 Remove his marble, and his genius dies ;
 With nature, then, no breathing statue vies.

Whate'er I plan, I feel my powers confined
 By Fortune's frown and penury of mind.
 I boast no knowledge glean'd with toil and strife,
 That bright reward of a well-acted life.
 I view myself, while Reason's feeble light
 Shoots a pale glimmer through the gloom of night,
 While passions, error, phantoms of the brain,
 And vain opinions, fill the dark domain ;
 A dreary void, where fears with grief combined,
 Waste all within, and desolate the mind.

What then remains ? Must I, in slow decline,
 To mute, inglorious ease old age resign ?
 Or, bold ambition kindling in my breast,
 Attempt some arduous task ? Or, were it best,
 Brooding o'er *Lexicons* to pass the day,
 And in that labour drudge my life away ?

Such is the picture for which Dr. Johnson sat to himself. He gives the prominent features of his character ; his lassitude, his morbid melancholy, his love of fame, his dejection, his tavern parties, and his wandering reveries, about which so much has been written ; all are painted in miniature, but in vivid colours, by his own hand. His idea of writing more dictionaries was not merely said in verse.

Mr. Hamilton, who was at that time an eminent printer, and well acquainted with Dr. Johnson, remembers that he engaged in a Commercial Dictionary, and, as appears by the receipts in his possession, was paid his price for several sheets; but he soon relinquished the undertaking. It is probable that he found himself not sufficiently versed in that branch of knowledge.

He was again reduced to the expedient of short compositions for the supply of the day. The writer of this narrative has now before him a letter, in Dr. Johnson's handwriting, which shows the distress and melancholy situation of the man who had written the Rambler, and finished the great work of his Dictionary. The letter is directed to Mr. Richardson (the author of *Clarissa*), and is as follows:

"SIR,

"I am obliged to entreat your assistance. I am now under an arrest for five pounds eighteen shillings. Mr. Strahan, from whom I should have received the necessary help in this case, is not at home; and I am afraid of not finding Mr. Millar. If you will be so good as to send me this sum, I will very gratefully repay you, and add it to all former obligations.

"I am, sir,

"Your most obedient

"And most humble servant,

"SAMUEL JOHNSON.

'Gough Square, 16th March."

In the margin of this letter there is a memorandum in these words: "March 16, 1756, sent six guineas. Witness, Wm. Richardson." For the honour of an admired writer, it is to be regretted that we do not find a more liberal entry. To his friend in distress he sent eight shillings more than was wanted. Had an incident of this kind occurred in one of his romances, Richardson would have known how to grace

his hero; but in fictitious scenes, generosity costs the writer nothing.

About this time Johnson contributed several papers to a periodical miscellany, called "The Visitor," from motives which are highly honourable to him, a compassionate regard for the late Mr. Christopher Smart. The criticism on Pope's Epitaphs appeared in that work. In a short time after, he became a reviewer in the Literary Magazine, under the auspices of the late Mr. Newberry, a man of a projecting head, good taste, and great industry. This employment engrossed but little of Johnson's time. He resigned himself to indolence, took no exercise, rose about two, and then received the visits of his friends. Authors long since forgotten waited on him as their oracle, and he gave responses in the chair of criticism. He listened to the complaints, the schemes, and the hopes and fears of a crowd of inferior writers, "who," he said, in the words of Roger Ascham, "*lived, men knew not how, and died obscure, men marked not when.*" He believed that he could give a better history of Grub-street than any man living. His house was filled with a succession of visitors till four or five in the evening. During the whole time he presided at his tea-table. Tea was his favourite beverage; and when the late Jonas Hanway pronounced his anathema against the use of tea, Johnson rose in defence of his habitual practice, declaring himself "in that article a hardened sinner, who had for years diluted his meals with the infusion of that fascinating plant; whose teakettle had no time to cool; who with tea solaced the midnight hour, and with tea welcomed the morning."

The proposal for a new edition of Shakspeare, which had formerly miscarried, was resumed in the year 1756. The booksellers readily agreed to his terms, and subscription tickets were issued out. For undertaking this work, money, he confessed, was the inciting motive. His friends exerted themselves

to promote his interest; and, in the mean time, he engaged in a new periodical production called "The Idler." The first number appeared on Saturday, April 15, 1758; and the last, April 5, 1760. The profits of this work, and the subscriptions for the new edition of Shakspeare, were the means by which he supported himself for four or five years. In 1759 was published "*Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*." His translation of Lobo's *Voyage to Abyssinia* seems to have pointed out that country for the scene of action; and *Rassila Christos*, the general of *Sultan Segued*, mentioned in that work, most probably suggested the name of the prince. The author wanted to set out on a journey to Litchfield, in order to pay the last offices of filial piety to his mother, who, at the age of ninety, was then near her dissolution; but money was necessary. Mr. Johnston, a bookseller, gave one hundred pounds for the copy. With this supply Johnson set out for Litchfield, but did not arrive in time to close the eyes of a parent whom he loved. He attended the funeral, which, as appears among his memorandums, was on the 23d of January, 1759.

Johnson now found it necessary to retrench his expenses. He gave up his house in Gough Square. Mrs. Williams went into lodgings. He retired to Gray's Inn, and soon removed to chambers in the Inner Temple-lane, where he lived in poverty, total idleness, and the pride of literature. Mr. Fitzherbert, a man distinguished through life for his benevolence and other amiable qualities, used to say, that he paid a morning visit to Johnson, intending from his chambers to send a letter into the city; but, to his great surprise, he found an author by profession without pen, ink, or paper. The late Dr. Douglass, bishop of Salisbury, was also among those who endeavoured, by constant attention, to sooth the cares of a mind which he knew to be afflicted with gloomy apprehensions. At one of the parties made at his

house, Boscovich, the Jesuit, who had then lately introduced the Newtonian philosophy at Rome, and, after publishing an elegant Latin poem on the subject, was made a fellow of the Royal Society, was one of the company invited to meet Dr. Johnson. The conversation at first was mostly in French. Johnson, though thoroughly versed in that language, and a professed admirer of Boileau and La Bruyère, did not understand its pronunciation, nor could he speak it himself with propriety. For the rest of the evening the talk was in Latin. Boscovich had a ready current flow of that flimsy phraseology with which a priest may travel through Italy, Spain, and Germany. Johnson scorned what he called colloquial barbarisms. It was his pride to speak his best. He went on, after a little practice, with as much facility as if it were his native tongue.

We have now travelled through that part of Dr. Johnson's life which was a perpetual struggle with difficulties. Halcyon days are now to open upon him. In the month of May, 1762, his majesty, to reward literary merit, signified his pleasure to grant to Johnson a pension of three thousand pounds a year. The Earl of Bute was minister. Lord Loughborough, who, perhaps, was originally a mover in the business, had authority to mention it. He was well acquainted with Johnson; but, having heard much of his independent spirit, and of the downfall of Osborne the bookseller, he did not know but his benevolence might be rewarded with a folio on his head. He desired the author of these memoirs to undertake the task. This writer thought the opportunity of doing so much good the most happy incident in his life. He went, without delay, to the chambers in the Inner Temple-lane, which, in fact, were the abode of wretchedness. By slow, studied approaches, the message was disclosed. Johnson made a long pause: he asked if it was seriously intended. He fell into a profound medita-

tion, and his own definition of a pensioner occurred to him. He was told "That he, at least, did not come within the definition." He desired to meet me next day, and dine at the Mitre Tavern. At that meeting he gave up all his scruples. On the following day, Lord Loughborough conducted him to the Earl of Bute. The conversation that passed was in the evening related to this writer by Dr. Johnson. He expressed his sense of his majesty's bounty, and thought himself the more highly honoured, as the favour was not bestowed on him for having dipped his pen in faction. "No, sir," said Lord Bute, "it is not offered to you for having dipped your pen in faction, nor with a design that you ever should." Sir John Hawkins will have it, that, after this interview, Johnson was often pressed to wait on Lord Bute: but with a sullen spirit refused to comply. However that be, Johnson was never heard to utter a word of that nobleman. The writer of this essay remembers a circumstance which may throw some light on this subject. The late Dr. Rose, of Chiswick, whom Johnson loved and respected, contended for the pre-eminence of the Scotch writers; and Ferguson's book on Civil Society, then on the eve of publication, he said, would give the laurel to North Britain. "Alas! what can he do upon that subject?" said Johnson: "Aristotle, Polybius, Grotius, Puffendorf, and Burlemaqui have reaped in that field before him." "He will treat it," said Dr. Rose, "in a new manner." "A new manner! Buckinger had no hands, and he wrote his name with his toes at Charing-cross for half a crown a piece; that was a new manner of writing!" Dr. Rose replied, "If that will not satisfy you, I will name a writer whom you must allow to be the best in the kingdom." "Who is that?" "The Earl of Bute, when he wrote an order for your pension." "There, sir," said Johnson, "you have me in the toil: to Lord Bute I must allow whatever praise you

may claim for him." Ingratitude was no part of Johnson's character.

Being now in the possession of a regular income, Johnson left his chambers in the Temple, and once more became master of a house in Johnson's Court, Fleet-street. Dr. Levet, his friend and physician in ordinary,* paid his daily visits with assiduity; made tea all the morning, talked what he had to say, and did not expect an answer. Mrs. Williams had her apartment in the house, and entertained her benefactor with more enlarged conversation. Chemistry was part of Johnson's amusement. For this love of experimental philosophy, Sir John Hawkins thinks an apology necessary. He tells us, with great gravity, that curiosity was the only object in view; not an intention to grow suddenly rich by the philosopher's stone or the transmutation of metals. To enlarge his circle, Johnson once more had recourse to a literary club. This was at the Turk's Head, in Gerard-street, Soho, on every Tuesday evening through the year. The members were, besides himself, the Right Hon. Edmund Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Nugent, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Topham Beauclerk, Mr. Langton, Mr. Chamier, Sir John Hawkins, and some others. Johnson's affection for Sir Joshua was founded on a long acquaintance, and a thorough knowledge of the virtues and amiable qualities of that excellent artist. He delighted in the conversation of Mr. Burke. He met him for the first time at Mr. Garrick's. On the next day he said, "I suppose, Murphy, you are proud of your countryman." From that time his constant observation was, "That a man of sense could not meet Mr. Burke by accident, under a gateway, to avoid a shower, without being convinced that he was the first man in England." Johnson felt not only kindness, but zeal and ardor

* See Johnson's Epitaph on him.

for his friends. He did everything in his power to advance the reputation of Dr. Goldsmith. He loved him, though he knew his failings, and particularly the leaven of envy, which corroded the mind of that elegant writer, and made him impatient, without disguise, of the praises bestowed on any person whatever. Of this infirmity, which marked Goldsmith's character, Johnson gave a remarkable instance. It happened that he went with Sir Joshua Reynolds and Goldsmith to see the Fantoccini, which were exhibited some years ago in or near the Haymarket. They admired the curious mechanism by which the puppets were made to walk the stage, draw a chair to the table, sit down, write a letter, and perform a variety of other actions, with such dexterity, that, "though Nature's journeymen made the men, they imitated humanity" to the astonishment of the spectator. The entertainment being over, the three friends retired to a tavern. Johnson and Sir Joshua talked with pleasure of what they had seen; and says Johnson, in a tone of admiration, "How the little fellow brandished his spontoon!" "There is nothing in it," replied Goldsmith, starting up with impatience; "give me a spontoon, and I can do it as well myself."

Enjoying his amusements at his weekly club, and happy in a state of independence, Johnson gained, in the year 1765, another resource, which contributed more than anything else to exempt him from the solitudes of life. He was introduced to the late Mr. Thrale and his family. Mrs. Piozzi has related the fact, and it is therefore needless to repeat it in this place. The author of this narrative looks back to the share he had in that business with self-congratulation, since he knows the tenderness which from that time soothed Johnson's cares at Streatham, and prolonged a valuable life. The subscribers to Shakspeare began to despair of ever seeing the promised edition. To acquit himself of this

obligation, he went to work unwillingly, but proceeded with vigour. In the month of October, 1765, *Shakspeare* was published; and, in a short time after, the University of Dublin sent over a diploma, in honourable terms, creating him a Doctor of Laws. Oxford, in eight or ten years afterward, followed the example; and, till then, Johnson never assumed the title of Doctor. In 1766 his constitution seemed to be in a rapid decline; and that morbid melancholy which often clouded his understanding, came upon him with a deeper gloom than ever. Mr. and Mrs. Thrale paid him a visit in this situation, and found him on his knees, with Dr. Delap, the rector of Lewes, in Sussex, beseeching God to continue to him the use of his understanding. Mr. Thrale took him to his house at Streatham; and Johnson from that time became a constant resident in the family. He went occasionally to the club in Gerard-street; but his headquarters were fixed at Streatham. An apartment was fitted up for him, and the library was greatly enlarged. Parties were occasionally invited from town; and Johnson was every day at an elegant table, with select and polished company. Whatever could be devised by Mr. and Mrs. Thrale to promote the happiness, and establish the health of their guest, was studiously performed from that time to the end of Mr. Thrale's life. Johnson accompanied the family in all their summer excursions to Brighthelmstone, to Wales, and to Paris. It is but just to Mr. Thrale to say, that a more ingenuous frame of mind no man possessed. His education at Oxford gave him the habits of a gentleman; his amiable temper recommended his conversation; and the goodness of his heart made him a sincere friend. That he was the patron of Johnson is an honour to his memory.

In petty disputes with contemporary writers or the wits of the age, Johnson was seldom entangled. A single instance of that kind may not be unworthy

of notice, since it happened with a man of great celebrity in his time. A number of friends dined with Garrick on a Christmas day. Foote was then in Ireland. It was said at table that the modern Aristophanes (so Foote was called) had been horse-whipped by a Dublin apothecary for mimicking him on the stage. "I wonder," said Garrick, "that any man should show so much resentment to Foote; he has a patent for such liberties; nobody ever thought it *worth his while* to quarrel with him in London." "I am glad," said Johnson, "to find that the *man is rising in the world*." The expression was afterward reported to Foote; who, in return, gave out, that he would produce the *Caliban of Literature* on the stage. Being informed of this design, Johnson sent word to Foote, "That the theatre being intended for the reformation of vice, he would step from the boxes on the stage, and correct him before the audience." Foote knew the intrepidity of his antagonist, and abandoned the design. No ill-will ensued. Johnson used to say, "That, for broad-faced mirth, Foote had not his equal."

Dr. Johnson's fame excited the curiosity of the king. His majesty expressed a desire to see a man of whom extraordinary things were said. Accordingly, the librarian at Buckingham House invited Johnson to see that elegant collection of books, at the same time giving a hint of what was intended. His majesty entered the room; and, among other things, asked the author "If he meant to give the world any more of his compositions." Johnson answered, "That he thought he had written enough." "And I should think so too," replied his majesty, "if you had not written so well."

Though Johnson thought he had written enough, his genius, even in spite of bodily sluggishness, could not lie still. In 1770 we find him entering the lists as a political writer. The flame of discord that blazed throughout the nation on the expulsion of

Mr. Wilkes, and the final determination of the House of Commons, that Mr. Luttrell was duly elected, by 206 votes against 1143, spread a general spirit of discontent. To allay the tumult, Dr. Johnson published *The False Alarm*. Mrs. Piozzi informs us, "That this pamphlet was written at her house, between eight o'clock on Wednesday night and twelve on Thursday night." This celerity has appeared wonderful to many, and some have doubted the truth. It may, however, be placed within the bounds of probability. Johnson has observed that there are different methods of composition. Virgil was used to pour out a great number of verses in the morning, and pass the day in retrenching the exuberances and correcting inaccuracies; and it was Pope's custom to write his first thoughts in his first words, and gradually to amplify, decorate, rectify, and refine them. Others employ at once memory and invention, and, with little intermediate use of the pen, form and polish large masses by continued meditation, and write their productions only, when, in their opinion, they have completed them. This last was Johnson's method. He never took his pen in hand till he had well weighed his subject, and grasped in his mind the sentiments, the train of argument, and the arrangement of the whole. As he often thought aloud, he had, perhaps, talked it over to himself. This may account for that rapidity with which, in general, he despatched his sheets to the press, without being at the trouble of a fair copy. Whatever may be the logic or eloquence of the *False Alarm*, the House of Commons have since erased the resolution from the journals; but whether they have not left materials for a future controversy may be made a question.

In 1771 he published another tract, on the subject of Falkland Islands. The design was to show the impropriety of going to war with Spain for an island thrown aside from human use, stormy in

winter, and barren in summer. For this work it is apparent that materials were furnished by direction of the minister.

At the approach of the general election in 1774, he wrote a short discourse, called *The Patriot*; not with any visible application to Mr. Wilkes, but to teach the people to reject the leaders of opposition who called themselves patriots. In 1775 he undertook a pamphlet of more importance, namely, *Taxation no Tyranny*, in answer to the resolutions and address of the American Congress. The scope of the argument was, that distant colonies, which had in their assemblies a legislature of their own, were, notwithstanding, liable to be taxed in a British Parliament, where they had neither peers in one house nor representatives in the other. He was of opinion that Britain was strong enough to enforce obedience. "When an Englishman," he says, "is told that the Americans shoot up like the hydra, he naturally considers how the hydra was destroyed." The event has shown how much he and the minister of that day were mistaken.

The *Account of the Tour to the Western Islands of Scotland*, which was undertaken in the autumn of 1773, in company with Mr. Boswell, was not published till some time in the year 1775. This book has been variously received; by some extolled for the elegance of the narrative, and the depth of observation on life and manners; by others as much condemned, as a work of avowed hostility to the Scotch nation. The praise was, beyond all question, fairly deserved; and the censure, on due examination, will appear hasty and ill founded. That Johnson entertained some prejudices against the Scotch must not be dissembled. It is true, as Mr. Boswell says, "that he thought their success in England exceeded their proportion of real merit, and he could not but see in them that nationality which no liberal-minded Scotsman will deny." The author of these memoirs

well remembers, that Johnson one day asked him, "Have you observed the difference between your own country impudence and Scotch impudence?" The answer being in the negative: "Then I will tell you," said Johnson. "The impudence of an Irishman is the impudence of a fly, that buzzes about you, and you put it away, but it returns again, and flutters and teases you. The impudence of a Scotsman is the impudence of a leach, that fixes, and sucks your blood." Upon another occasion, this writer went with him into the shop of Davis the bookseller, in Russel-street, Covent Garden. Davis came running to him almost out of breath with joy. "The Scots gentleman is come, sir; his principal wish is to see you; he is now in the back parlour." "Well, well, I'll see the gentleman," said Johnson. He walked towards the room. Mr. Boswell was the person. This writer followed with no small curiosity. "I find," said Mr. Boswell, "that I am come to London at a bad time, when great popular prejudice has gone forth against us North Britons; but when I am talking to you, I am talking to a large and liberal mind, and you know that I cannot *help coming from Scotland*." "Sir," said Johnson, "no more can the rest of your countrymen."*

It is well known that he loved and respected many gentlemen from that part of the island. Dr. Robertson's History of Scotland, and Dr. Beattie's Essays, were subjects of his constant praise. Mr. Boswell, Dr. Rose of Chiswick, Andrew Millar, Mr. Hamilton the printer, and the late Mr. Strahan, were among his most intimate friends. Many others might be added to the list. He scorned to enter Scotland as a spy; though Hawkins, his biographer, and the professing defender of his fame, allowed himself leave to represent him in that ignoble character. He went

* Mr. Boswell's account of this introduction is very different from the above. See his Life of Johnson, vol. i., p. 360, 8vo, edit. 1804.

into Scotland to survey men and manners. Antiquities, fossils, and minerals were not within his province. He did not visit that country to settle the station of Roman camps, or the spot where Galgacus fought the last battle for public liberty. The people, their customs, and the progress of literature were his objects. The civilities which he received in the course of his tour have been repaid with grateful acknowledgment, and generally, with great elegance of expression. His crime is, that he found the country bare of trees, and he has stated the fact. This Mr. Boswell, in his *Tour to the Hebrides*, has told us, was resented by his countrymen with anger inflamed to rancour; but he admits that there are few trees on the east side of Scotland. Mr. Pennant, in his *Tour*, says, that in some parts of the eastern side of the country, he saw several large plantations of pine planted by gentlemen near their seats; and in this respect such a laudable spirit prevails, that *in another half century* it never shall be said, "*To spy the nakedness of the land are you come.*" Johnson could not wait for that half century, and therefore mentioned things as he found them. If in anything he has been mistaken, he has made a fair apology in the last paragraph of his book, avowing with candour, "that he may have been surprised by modes of life and appearances of nature that are familiar to men of wider survey and more varied conversation. Novelty and ignorance must always be reciprocal; and he is conscious that his thoughts on national manners are the thoughts of one who has seen but little."

The Poems of Ossian made a part of Johnson's inquiry during his residence in Scotland and the Hebrides. On his return to England, November, 1773, a storm seemed to be gathering over his head; but the cloud never burst, and the thunder never fell. Ossian, it is well known, was presented to the public as a translation from the *Earse*; but that this was a fraud, Johnson declared without hesitation. "The

Earse," he says, "was always oral only, and never a written language. The Welsh and the Irish were more cultivated. In *Earse* there was not in the world a single manuscript a hundred years old. Martin, who in the last century published an Account of the Western Islands, mentions *Irish*, but never *Earse* manuscripts, to be found in the islands in his time. The bards could not read; if they could, they might probably have written. But the bard was a barbarian among barbarians, and, knowing nothing himself, lived with others that knew no more. If there is a manuscript from which the translation was made, in what age was it written, and where is it? If it was collected from oral recitation, it could only be in detached parts and scattered fragments; the whole is too long to be remembered. Who put it together in its present form?" For these and such like reasons, Johnson calls the whole an imposture. He adds, "The editor or author never could show the original, nor can it be shown by any other. To revenge reasonable incredulity by refusing evidence, is a degree of insolence with which the world is not yet acquainted; and stubborn audacity is the last refuge of guilt." This reasoning carries with it great weight. It roused the resentment of Mr. Macpherson. He sent a threatening letter to the author; and Johnson answered him in the rough phrase of stern defiance. The two heroes frowned at a distance, but never came to action.

In the year 1777, the misfortunes of Dr. Dodd excited his compassion. He wrote a speech for that unhappy man, when called up to receive judgment of death; besides two petitions, one to the king and another to the queen: and a sermon to be preached by Dodd to the convicts in Newgate.

We come now to the last of his literary labours. At the request of the booksellers, he undertook the *Lives of the Poets*. The first publication was in 1779, and the whole was completed in 1781. In a

memorandum of that year he says, some time in March he finished the *Lives of the Poets*, which he wrote in his usual way, dilatorily and hastily, unwilling to work, yet working with vigour and haste. In another place, he hopes they are written in such a manner as may tend to the promotion of piety. That the history of so many men, who, in their different degrees, made themselves conspicuous in their time, was not written recently after their deaths, seems to be an omission that does no honour to the Republic of Letters. Their contemporaries in general looked on with calm indifference, and suffered Wit and Genius to vanish out of the world in total silence, unregarded and unlamented. Was there no friend to pay the tribute of a tear? No just observer of life, to record the virtues of the deceased? Was even Envy silent? It seemed to have been agreed, that if an author's works survived, the history of the man was to give no moral lesson to after ages. If tradition told us that Ben Jonson went to the Devil tavern; that Shakspeare stole deer, and held the stirrup at playhouse doors; and that Dryden frequented Button's Coffee-house, curiosity was lulled asleep, and biography forgot the best part of her function, which is to instruct mankind by examples taken from the school of life. This task remained for Dr. Johnson, when years had rolled away; when the channels of information were for the most part choked up, and little remained besides doubtful anecdote, uncertain tradition, and vague report.

The value of biography has been better understood in other ages and in other countries. Tacitus informs us, that to record the lives and characters of illustrious men was the practice of the Roman authors, in the early periods of the republic. In France the example has been followed. Fontenelle, D'Alembert, and Monsieur Thomas have left models in this kind of composition. They have *embalmed* the dead. But it is true that they had incitements

and advantages, even at a distant day, which could not, by any diligence, be obtained by Dr. Johnson. The wits of France had ample materials. They lived in a nation of critics, who had at heart the honour done to their country by their poets, their heroes, and their philosophers. They had, besides, an *Academy of Belles-lettres*, where Genius was cultivated, refined, and encouraged. They had the tracts, the essays, and dissertations which remain in the memoirs of the academy, and they had the speeches of the several members, delivered at their first admission to a seat in that learned assembly. In those speeches the new academician did ample justice to the memory of his predecessor; and though his harangue was decorated with the colours of eloquence, and was, for that reason, called panegyric, yet, being pronounced before qualified judges, who knew the talents, the conduct, and morals of the deceased, the speaker could not, with propriety, wander into the regions of fiction. The truth was known before it was adorned. The academy saw the marble before the artist polished it. But England has had no Academy of Literature. The public mind, for centuries, has been engrossed by party and faction; *by the madness of many for the gain of a few*; by civil wars, religious dissensions, trade and commerce, and the arts of accumulating wealth. Amid such attentions, who can wonder that cold praise has been often the only reward of merit? In England, Doctor Nathaniel Hodges, who, like the good Bishop of Marseilles, *drew purer breath* amid the contagion of the plague in London, and, during the whole time, continued in the city, administering medical assistance, was suffered, as Johnson used to relate with tears in his eyes, to die for debt in a jail. In England, the man who brought the New River to London was ruined by that noble project; and in England, Otway died for want on Tower Hill; Butler, the great author of *Hudibras*, whose name can only die with the English

language, was left to languish in poverty, the particulars of his life almost unknown, and scarce a vestige of him left except his immortal poem. Had there been an Academy of Literature, the lives, at least, of those celebrated persons would have been written for the benefit of posterity. Swift, it seems, had the idea of such an institution, and proposed it to Lord Oxford; but Whig and Tory were more important objects. It is needless to dissemble, that Dr. Johnson, in the *Life of Roscommon*, talks of the inutility of such a project. "In this country," he says, "an academy could be expected to do but little. If an academicians place were profitable, it would be given by interest; if attendance were gratuitous, it would be rarely paid, and no man would endure the least disgust. Unanimity is impossible, and debate would separate the assembly." To this it may be sufficient to answer, that the Royal Society has not been dissolved by sullen disgust; and the modern academy at Somerset House has already performed much, and promises more. Unanimity is not necessary to such an assembly. On the contrary, by difference of opinions and collision of sentiment, the cause of literature would thrive and flourish. The true principles of criticism, the secret of fine writing, the investigation of antiquities, and other interesting subjects, might occasion a clash of opinion; but in that contention, Truth would receive illustration, and the essays of the several members would supply the memoirs of the academy. "But," says Dr. Johnson, "suppose the philological decree made and promulgated, what would be its authority? In absolute government there is sometimes a general reverence paid to all that has the sanction of power, the countenance of greatness. How little this is the state of our country needs not be told. The edicts of an English academy would probably be read by many, only that they may be sure to disobey them. The present manners of the nation would deride authority, and therefore nothing is left but that every writer

should criticise himself." This is not conclusive. It is by the standard of the best writers that every man settles for himself his plan of legitimate composition; and since the authority of superior genius is acknowledged, that authority which the individual obtains would not be lessened by association with others of distinguished ability. It may therefore be inferred, that an Academy of Literature would be an establishment highly useful, and an honour to literature. In such an institution profitable places would not be wanted; and the minister who shall find leisure from party and faction to carry such a scheme into execution, will in all probability be respected by posterity as the Mæcenas of letters.

We now take leave of Dr. Johnson as an author. Four volumes of his *Lives of the Poets* were published in 1778, and the work was completed in 1781. Should biography fall again into disuse, there will not always be a Johnson to look back through a century, and give a body of critical and moral instruction. In April, 1781, he lost his friend Mr. Thrale. His own words, in his diary, will best tell that melancholy event. "On Wednesday, the 11th of April, was buried my dear friend Mr. Thrale, who died on Wednesday the 4th, and with him were buried many of my hopes and pleasures. About five, I think, on Wednesday morning, he expired. I felt almost the last flutter of his pulse, and looked for the last time upon the face that, for fifteen years before, had never been turned upon me but with respect and benignity. Farewell! may God, that delighteth in mercy, have *had* mercy on thee! I had constantly prayed for him before his death. The decease of him from whose friendship I had obtained many opportunities of amusement, and to whom I turned my thoughts as to a refuge from misfortunes, has left me heavy. But my business is with myself." From the close of his last work, the malady that persecuted him through life came upon him with

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alarming severity, and his constitution declined apace. In 1782, his old friend *Levet* expired without warning and without a groan. Events like these reminded Johnson of his own mortality. He continued his visits to Mrs. Thrale, at Streatham, to the 7th day of October, 1782, when, having first composed a prayer for the happiness of a family with whom he had for many years enjoyed the pleasures and comforts of life, he removed to his own house in town. He says he was up early in the morning, and read fortuitously in the Gospel, *which was his parting use of the library*. The merit of the family is manifested by the sense he had of it, and we see his heart overflowing with gratitude. He leaves the place with regret, and *casts a lingering look behind*.

The few remaining occurrences may be soon despatched. In the month of June, 1783, Johnson had a paralytic stroke, which affected his speech only. He wrote to Dr. Taylor, of Westminster, and to his friend Mr. Allen, the printer, who lived at the next door. Dr. Brocklesby arrived in a short time, and by his care and that of Dr. Heberden, Johnson soon recovered. During his illness the writer of this narrative visited him, and found him reading Dr. Watson's Chymistry. Articulating with difficulty, he said, "From this book he who knows nothing may learn a great deal; and he who knows will be pleased to find his knowledge recalled to his mind in a manner highly pleasing." In the month of August he set out for Litchfield on a visit to Mrs. Lucy Porter, the daughter his wife by her first husband; and, in his way back, paid his respects to Dr. Adams, at Oxford. Mrs. Williams died at his house in Bolt Court, in the month of September, during his absence. This was another shock to a mind like his, ever agitated by the thoughts of futurity. The contemplation of his own approaching end was constantly before his eyes; and the prospect of death, he declared, was terrible. For

many years, when he was not disposed to enter into the conversation going forward, whoever sat near his chair might hear him repeating from Shakspeare,

“ Ay, but to die, and go we know not where ;
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot ;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod, and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods—”

And from Milton,

“ Who would lose,
For fear of pain, this intellectual being ?”

By the death of Mrs. Williams he was left in a state of destitution, with nobody but Frank, his black servant, to sooth his anxious moments. In November, 1783, he was swelled from head to foot with a dropsy. Dr. Brocklesby, with that benevolence with which he always assisted his friends, paid his visits with assiduity. The medicines prescribed were so efficacious, that in a few days Johnson, while he was offering up his prayers, was suddenly obliged to rise, and, in the course of the day, discharged twenty pints of water.

Johnson, being eased of his dropsy, began to entertain hopes that the vigour of his constitution was not entirely broken. For the sake of conversing with his friends, he established a conversation club, to meet on every Wednesday evening ; and, to serve a man whom he had known in Mr. Thrale's household for many years, the place was fixed at his house in Essex-street, near the Temple. To answer the malignant remarks of Sir John Hawkins on this subject were a wretched waste of time. Professing to be Johnson's friend, that biographer has raised more objections to his character than all the enemies to that excellent man. Sir John had a root of bitterness that *put rancours in the vessel of his peace*. Fielding, he says, was the inventor of a

cant phrase, *Goodness of heart, which means little more than the virtue of a horse or a dog*. He should have known that kind affections are the essence of virtue: they are the will of God, implanted in our nature to aid and strengthen moral obligation; they incite to action; a sense of benevolence is no less necessary than a sense of duty. Good affections are an ornament not only to an author, but to his writings. He who shows himself upon a cold scent for opportunities to bark and snarl throughout a volume of six hundred pages, may, if he will, pretend to moralize; but goodness of heart, or, to use that politer phrase, the *virtue of a horse or a dog*, would redound more to his honour. But Sir John is no more: our business is with Johnson. The members of his club were respectable for their rank, their talents, and their literature. They attended with punctuality till about midsummer, 1784, when, with some appearance of health, Johnson went into Derbyshire, and thence to Litchfield. While he was in that part of the world, his friends in town were labouring for his benefit. The air of a more southern climate, they thought, might prolong a valuable life. But a pension of £300 a year was a slender fund for a travelling valetudinarian, and it was not then known that he had saved a moderate sum of money. Mr. Boswell and Sir Joshua Reynolds undertook to solicit the patronage of the chancellor. With Lord Thurlow, while he was at the bar, Johnson was well acquainted. He was often heard to say, "Thurlow is a man of such vigour of mind, that I never knew I was to meet him but—I was going to say I was afraid, but that would not be true, for I never was afraid of any man; but I never knew that I was to meet Thurlow but I knew I had something to encounter." The chancellor undertook to recommend Johnson's case, but without success. To protract, if possible, the days of a man whom he respected, he offered to

advance the sum of five hundred pounds. Being informed of this at Litchfield, Johnson wrote the following letter:

"MY LORD,

"After a long and not inattentive observation of mankind, the generosity of your lordship's offer raises in me not less wonder than gratitude. Bounty so liberally bestowed I should gladly receive if my condition made it necessary; for to such a mind, who would not be proud to own his obligations? But it has pleased God to restore me to so great a measure of health, that if I should now appropriate so much of a fortune destined to do good, I could not escape from the charge of advancing a false claim. My journey to the Continent, though I once thought it necessary, was never much encouraged by my physicians; and I was very desirous that your lordship should be told it by Sir Joshua Reynolds as an event very uncertain; for, if I grew much better, I should not be willing; if much worse, I should not be able to migrate. Your lordship was first solicited without my knowledge; but when I was told that you were pleased to honour me with your patronage, I did not expect to hear of a refusal; yet, as I have had no long time to brood hopes, and have not rioted in imaginary opulence, this cold reception has been scarce a disappointment; and from your lordship's kindness I have received a benefit, which only men like you are able to bestow. I shall now live *mihi carior*, with a higher opinion of my own merit.

"I am, my lord, your lordship's most obliged, most grateful, and most humble servant,

"SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Sept., 1784."

We have in this instance the exertion of two congenial minds: one, with a generous impulse relieving merit in distress; and the other, by gratitude

and dignity of sentiment, rising to an equal elevation.

Greatness of mind, however, is not confined to greatness of rank. Dr. Brocklesby was not content to assist with his medical art; he resolved to minister to his patient's mind, and pluck from his memory the sorrow which the late refusal from a high quarter might occasion. To enable him to visit the south of France in pursuit of health, he offered from his own funds an annuity of one hundred pounds, payable quarterly. This was a *sweet oblivious antidote*, but it was not accepted, for the reasons assigned to the chancellor. The proposal, however, will do honour to Dr. Brocklesby, as long as liberal sentiment shall be ranked among the social virtues.

In the month of October, 1784, we find Dr. Johnson corresponding with Mr. Nichols, the intelligent compiler of the Gentleman's Magazine, and in the languor of sickness still desirous to contribute all in his power to the advancement of science and useful knowledge. He says, in a letter to that gentleman, dated Litchfield, October 20, that he should be glad to give so skilful a lover of antiquities any information. He adds, "At Ashburne, where I had very little company, I had the luck to borrow Mr. Bowyer's Life, a book so full of contemporary history that a literary man must find some of his old friends. I thought that I could now and then have told you some hints worth your notice: we perhaps may talk a life over. I hope we shall be much together. You must now be to me what you were before, and what dear Mr. Allen was besides. He was taken unexpectedly away, but I think he was a very good man. I have made very little progress in recovery. I am very weak and very sleepless; but I live on and hope."

In that languid condition he arrived, on the 16th of November, at his house in Bolt Court, there to end his days. He laboured with the dropsy and an

asthma. He was attended by Dr. Heberden, Dr. Warren, Dr. Brocklesby, Dr. Butter, and Mr. Cruikshank, the eminent surgeon. Eternity presented to his mind an awful prospect, and, with as much virtue as is often the lot of man, he shuddered at the thought of his dissolution. His friends awakened the comfortable reflection of a well-spent life; and, as his end drew near, they had the satisfaction of seeing him composed, and even cheerful, inso-much that he was able, in the course of his restless nights, to make translations of Greek epigrams from the Anthologia; and to compose a Latin epitaph for his father, his mother, and his brother Nathaniel. He meditated, at the same time, a Latin inscription to the memory of Garrick; but his vigour was exhausted.

His love of literature was a passion that stuck to his last sand. Seven days before his death he wrote the following letter to his friend Mr. Nichols:

"SIR,

"The late learned Mr. Swinton, of Oxford, having one day remarked that one man, meaning, I suppose, no man but himself, could assign all the parts of the Ancient Universal History to their proper authors, at the request of Sir Robert Chambers or myself, gave the account which I now transmit to you in his own hand, being willing that of so great a work the history should be known, and that each writer should receive his due proportion of praise from posterity.

"I recommend to you to preserve this scrap of literary intelligence in Mr. Swinton's own hand, or to deposite it in the museum,* that the veracity of this account may never be doubted.

"I am, sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"Dec. 6, 1784."

* It is there deposited.—J. N.

Mr. Swinton.

The history of the Carthaginians, Numidians, Mauritians, Gætulians, Garamantes, Melano-Gætulians, Nigritæ, Cyrenaica, Marmorica, Regio Syrtica, Turks, Tartars, and Moguls, Indians, Chinese, Dissertation on the peopling of America, Dissertation on the Independency of the Arabs.

The Cosmogony, and a small part of the history immediately following. By M. Sale.

To the Birth of Abraham. Chiefly by Mr. Shelvock.

History of the Jews, Gauls, and Spaniards. By Mr. Psalmanazar.

Xenophon's Retreat. By the same.

History of the Persians, and the Constantinopolitan Empire. By Dr. Campbell.

History of the Romans. By Mr. Bower.

On the morning of Dec. 7, Dr. Johnson requested to see Mr. Nichols. A few days before, he had borrowed some of the early volumes of the magazine, with a professed intention to point out the pieces which he had written in that collection. The books lay on the table, with many leaves doubled down, and, in particular, those which contained his share in the Parliamentary Debates. Such was the goodness of Johnson's heart, that he then declared that "those debates were the only parts of his writings which gave him any compunction: but that, at the time he wrote them, he had no conception that he was imposing upon the world, though they were frequently written from very slender materials, and often from none at all, the mere coinage of his own imagination." He added, "that he never wrote any part of his works with equal velocity. Three columns of the magazine in an hour," he said, "was no uncommon effort; which was faster than most persons could have transcribed that quantity. In one day, in particular, and that not a very long one, he wrote twelve pages, more in quantity than he ever wrote at any other time, except in the Life

of Savage, of which forty-eight pages in octavo were the production of one long day, including a part of the night."

In the course of the conversation, he asked whether any of the family of Faden, the printer, were living. Being told that the geographer near Charing Cross was Faden's son, he said, after a short pause, "I borrowed a guinea of his father near thirty years ago; be so good as to take this, and pay it for me."

Wishing to discharge every duty and every obligation, Johnson recollected another debt of ten pounds which he had borrowed from his friend Mr. Hamilton, the printer, about twenty years before. He sent the money to Mr. Hamilton, at his house in Bedford Row, with an apology for the length of time. The Reverend Mr. Strahan was the bearer of the message, about four or five days before Johnson breathed his last.

Mr. Sastress, whom Dr. Johnson esteemed and mentioned in his will, entered the room during his illness. Dr. Johnson, as soon as he saw him, stretched forth his hand, and, in a tone of lamentation, called out, *JAM MORITURUS!* (already dead). But the love of life was still an active principle. Feeling himself swelled with the dropsy, he conceived that, by incisions in his legs, the water might be discharged. Mr. Cruikshank apprehended that a mortification might be the consequence; but, to appease a distempered fancy, he gently lanced the surface. Johnson cried out, "Deeper, deeper! I want length of life, and you are afraid of giving me pain, which I do not value."

On the 8th of December the Reverend Mr. Strahan drew his will, by which, after a few legacies, the residue, amounting to about fifteen hundred pounds, was bequeathed to Frank, the black servant, formerly consigned to the testator by his friend Dr. Bathurst.

The history of a deathbed is painful. Mr. Strahan informs us that the strength of religion prevailed against the infirmity of nature; and his foreboding dread of the Divine Justice subsided into a pious trust and humble hope of mercy at the Throne of Grace. On Monday, the 13th day of December (the last of his existence on this side the grave), the desire of life returned with all its former vehemence. He still imagined that, by puncturing his legs, relief might be obtained. At eight in the morning he tried the experiment, but no water followed. In an hour or two after he fell into a doze, and about seven in the evening expired without a groan.

On the 20th of the month his remains, with due solemnities and a numerous attendance of his friends, were buried in Westminster Abbey, near the foot of Shakspeare's monument, and close to the grave of the late Mr. Garrick. The funeral service was read by his friend Dr. Taylor.

A black marble over his grave has the following inscription :

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.
obiit xiii. die Decembris,
Anno Domini
MDCCLXXXIV.
Ætatis suæ LXXV.

If we now look back, as from an eminence, to view the scenes of life and the literary labours in which Dr. Johnson was engaged, we may be able to delineate the features of the man and to form an estimate of his genius.

As a man, Dr. Johnson stands displayed in open daylight. Nothing remains undiscovered. Whatever he said is known; and, without allowing him the usual privilege of hazarding sentiments and advancing positions for mere amusement or the pleasure of discussion, criticism has endeavoured to make him answerable for what, perhaps, he never

seriously thought. His diary, which has been printed, discovers still more. We have before us the very heart of the man, with all his inward consciousness. And yet, neither in the open paths of life nor in his secret recesses has any one vice been discovered. We see him reviewing every year of his life, and severely censuring himself for not keeping resolutions which morbid melancholy and other bodily infirmities rendered impracticable. We see him for every little defect imposing on himself voluntary penance, going through the day with only one cup of tea without milk, and to the last, amid paroxysms and remissions of illness, forming plans of study and resolutions to amend his life.* Many of his scruples may be called weaknesses; but they are the weaknesses of a good, a pious, and most excellent man.

His person, it is well-known, was large and unwieldy. His nerves were affected by that disorder for which, at two years of age, he was presented to the royal touch. His head shook, and involuntary motions made it uncertain that his legs and arms would, even at a tea-table, remain in their proper place. A person of Lord Chesterfield's delicacy might in his company be in a fever. He would sometimes, of his own accord, do things inconsistent with the established modes of behaviour. Sitting at table with the celebrated Mrs. Cholmondeley, who exerted herself to circulate the subscription for Shakspeare, he took hold of her hand in the middle of dinner, and held it close to his eye, wondering at the delicacy and whiteness, till, with a smile, she asked, "Will he give it to me again when he has done with it?" The exteriors of politeness did not belong to Johnson. Even that civility which proceeds, or ought to proceed, from the mind, was

* On the subject of voluntary penance, see the Essay entitled *Thoughts on Repentance*, in these volumes.

sometimes violated. His morbid melancholy had an effect on his temper; his passions were irritable; and the pride of science, as well as of a fierce, independent spirit, inflamed him on some occasions above all bounds of moderation. Though not in the shade of academic bowers, he led a scholastic life; and the habit of pronouncing decisions to his friends and visitors gave him a dictatorial manner, which was much enforced by a voice naturally loud and often overstretched. Metaphysical discussion, moral theory, systems of religion, and anecdotes of literature, were his favourite topics. General history had little of his regard. Biography was his delight. *The proper study of mankind is man.* Sooner than hear of the Punic war, he would be rude to the person that introduced the subject.

Johnson was born a logician; one of those to whom only books of logic are said to be of use. In consequence of his skill in that art, he loved argumentation. No man thought more profoundly, nor with such acute discernment. A fallacy could not stand before him; it was sure to be refuted by strength of reasoning, and a precision both in idea and expression almost unequalled. When he chose, by apt illustration, to place the argument of his adversary in a ludicrous light, one was almost inclined to think *ridicule the test of truth*. He was surprised to be told, but it was certainly true, that, with great powers of mind, wit and humour were his shining talents. That he often argued for the sake of triumph over his adversary cannot be dissembled. Dr. Rose, of Chiswick, has been heard to tell of a friend of his, who thanked him for introducing him to Dr. Johnson, as he had been convinced, in the course of a long dispute, that an opinion which he had embraced as a settled truth was no better than a vulgar error. This being reported to Johnson, "Nay," said he, "do not let him be thankful, for he was right and I was wrong." Like his uncle

Andrew in the ring at Smithfield, Johnson, in a circle of disputants, was determined *neither to be thrown nor conquered*. Notwithstanding all his piety, self-government, or the command of his passions in conversation, does not seem to have been among his attainments. Whenever he thought the contention was for superiority, he has been known to break out with violence, and even ferocity. When the fray was over, he generally softened into repentance, and, by conciliating measures, took care that no animosity should be left rankling in the breast of his antagonist. Of this defect he seems to have been conscious. In a letter to Mrs. Thrale, he says, "Poor Barette! do not quarrel with him; to neglect him a little will be sufficient. He means only to be frank, and manly, and independent, and perhaps, as you say, a little wise. To be frank, he thinks, is to be cynical; and to be independent is to be rude. Forgive him, dearest lady, the rather, because of his misbehaviour I am afraid he learned part of me. I hope to set him hereafter a better example." For his own intolerant and overbearing spirit he apologized by observing that it had done some good; obscenity and impiety were repressed in his company.

It was late in life before he had the habit of mixing, otherwise than occasionally, with polite company. At Mr. Thrale's he saw a constant succession of well-accomplished visitors. In that society he began to wear off the rugged points of his own character. He saw the advantages of mutual civility, and endeavoured to profit by the models before him. He aimed at what has been called by Swift the *lesser morals*, and by Cicero *minores virtutes*—the *smaller virtues*. His endeavour, though new and late, gave pleasure to all his acquaintance. Men were glad to see that he was willing to be communicative on equal terms and reciprocal complaisance. The time was then expected when he was

to cease being what George Garrick, brother to the celebrated actor, called him the first time he heard him converse, "A TREMENDOUS COMPANION." He certainly wished to be polite, and even thought himself so; but his civility still retained something uncouth and harsh. His manners took a milder tone, but the endeavour was too palpably seen. He laboured even in trifles. He was a giant gaining a *purchase* to lift a feather.

It is observed by the younger Pliny, that in the confines of virtue and great qualities there are generally vices of an opposite nature. In Dr. Johnson not one ingredient can take the name of vice. From his attainments in literature grew the pride of knowledge; and from his powers of reasoning, the love of disputation and the vainglory of superior vigour. He was willing to believe in preternatural agency, and thought it not more strange that there should be evil spirits than evil men. His piety, in some instances, bordered on superstition. Even the question about second sight held him in suspense. "Second sight," Mr. Pennant tells us, "is a power of seeing images impressed on the organs of sight by the power of fancy, or on the fancy by the disordered spirits operating on the mind. It is the faculty of seeing spectres or visions, which represent an event actually passing at a distance or likely to happen at a future day. In 1771, a gentleman, the last who was supposed to be possessed of this faculty, had a boat at sea in a tempestuous night, and, being anxious for his freight, suddenly started up, and said his men would be drowned, for he had seen them pass before him with wet garments and dripping locks. The event corresponded with his disordered fancy. And thus," continues Mr. Pennant, "a distempered imagination, clouded with anxiety, may make an impression on the spirits; as persons restless and troubled with indignation see various forms and figures while they lie

awake in bed." This is what Dr. Johnson was not willing to reject. He wished for some positive proof of communication with another world. His benevolence embraced the whole race of man, and yet was tinctured with particular prejudices. He was pleased with the minister in the Isle of Sky, and loved him so much that he began to wish him not a Presbyterian. To that body of dissenters his zeal for the Established Church made him in some degree an adversary; and his attachment to a mixed and limited monarchy led him to declare open war against what he called a sullen republican. He would rather praise a man of Oxford than of Cambridge. He disliked a Whig and loved a Tory. These were the shades of his character, which it has been the business of certain party writers to represent in the darkest colours.

Since virtue or moral goodness consists in a just conformity of our actions to the relations in which we stand to the Supreme Being and to our fellow-creatures, where shall we find a man who has been, or endeavoured to be, more diligent in the discharge of those essential duties? His first prayer was composed in 1738; he continued those fervent ejaculations of piety to the end of his life. In his Meditations we see him scrutinizing himself with severity, and aiming at perfection unattainable by man. His duty to his neighbour consisted in universal benevolence, and a constant aim at the production of happiness. Who was more sincere and steady in his friendships? His humanity and generosity, in proportion to his slender income, were unbounded. It has been truly said, that the lame, the blind, and the sorrowful found in his house a sure retreat. A strict adherence to truth he considered as a sacred obligation, insomuch that, in relating the most minute anecdote, he would not allow himself the smallest addition to embellish his story. The late Mr Tyers, who knew Dr. Johnson intimately, ob-

served, "that he always talked as if he was talking upon oath."

After a long acquaintance with this excellent man, and an attentive retrospect to his whole conduct, such is the light in which he appears to the writer of this essay. The following lines may be deemed his picture in miniature.

"Your friend is passionate, perhaps unfit
For the brisk petulance of modern wit.
His hair ill-cut, his robe that awkward flows,
Or his large shoes, to raillery expose
The man you love ; yet is he not possess'd
Of virtues, with which very few are bless'd ?
While underneath this rude, uncouth disguise,
A genius of extensive knowledge lies."

FRANCIS'S HOR., Book i., Sat. 3.

It remains to give a review of Johnson's works ; and this, it is imagined, will not be unwelcome to the reader.

Like Milton and Addison, he seems to have been fond of his Latin poetry. Those compositions show that he was an early scholar ; but his verses have not the graceful ease that gave so much suavity to the poems of Addison. The translation of the *Messiah* labours under two disadvantages ; it is first to be compared with Pope's inimitable performance, and afterward with the *Pollio* of Virgil. But the translation has great merit, and some admirable lines. In the odes there is a sweet flexibility, particularly to his worthy friend Dr. Laurence ; on himself at the theatre, March 8, 1771 ; the Ode in the Isle of Sky ; and that to Mrs. Thrale, from the same place.

His English poetry is such as leaves room to think, if he had devoted himself to the Muses, that he would have been the rival of Pope. His first production in this kind was *London*, a poem in imitation of the third satire of Juvenal. 'The vices of the metropolis are placed in the room of ancient manners. The author had heated his mind with the

ardour of Juvenal, and, having the skill to polish his numbers, he became a sharp accuser of the times. The *Vanity of Human Wishes* is an imitation of the tenth satire of the same author. Though it is translated by Dryden, Johnson's imitation approaches nearest to the spirit of the original. The subject is taken from the *Alcibiades* of Plato, and has an intermixture of the sentiments of Socrates concerning the object of prayers offered up to the Deity. The general proposition is, that good and evil are so little understood by mankind, that their wishes, when granted, are always destructive. This is exemplified in a variety of instances, such as riches, state preferment, eloquence, military glory, long life, and the advantages of form and beauty. Juvenal's conclusion is worthy of a Christian poet, and such a pen as Johnson's. "Let us," he says, "leave it to the gods to judge what is fittest for us. Man is dearer to his Creator than to himself. If we must pray for special favour, let it be for a sound mind in a sound body. Let us pray for fortitude, that we may think the labours of Hercules and all his sufferings preferable to a life of luxury and the soft repose of Sardanapalus. This is a blessing within the reach of every man; this we can give ourselves. It is virtue, and virtue only, that can make us happy." In the translation, the zeal of the Christian conspired with the warmth and energy of the poet; but Juvenal is not eclipsed.

The tragedy of *Irene* is founded on a passage in Knolles's *History of the Turks*; an author highly commended in the *Rambler*, No. 122. An incident in the *Life of Mohammed the Great*, first Emperor of the Turks, is the hinge on which the fable is made to move. The substance of the story is shortly this. In 1453 Mohammed laid siege to Constantinople, and, having reduced the place, became enamoured of a fair Greek, whose name was Irene. The sultan invited her to embrace the law of the

Prophet, and to grace his throne. Enraged at this intended marriage, the janizaries formed a conspiracy to dethrone the emperor. To avert the impending danger, Mohammed, in a full assembly of the grandees, "catching with one hand," as Knolles relates it, "the fair Greek by the hair of her head, and drawing his falchion with the other, he at one blow struck off her head, to the great terror of them all; and, having so done, said unto them, Now, by this, judge whether your emperor is able to bridle his affections or not." The story is simple, and it remained for the author to amplify it with proper episodes, and give it complication and variety. The catastrophe is changed, and horror gives place to terror and pity. But, after all, the fable is cold and languid. There is not, throughout the piece, a single situation to excite curiosity and raise a conflict of passions. The diction is nervous, rich, and elegant; but splendid language and melodious numbers will make a fine poem, not a tragedy. The sentiments are beautiful, always happily expressed, but seldom appropriate to the character, and generally too philosophic. What Johnson has said of the tragedy of Cato may be applied to Irene: "It is rather a poem in dialogue than a drama; rather a succession of just sentiments in elegant language, than a representation of natural affections. Nothing excites or assuages emotion. The events are expected without solicitude, and are remembered without joy or sorrow. Of the agents we have no care; we consider not what they are doing nor what they are suffering; we wish only to know what they have to say. It is unassuming elegance and chill philosophy."

The Rambler may be considered as Johnson's great work. It was the basis of that high reputation which went on increasing to the end of his days. The circulation of those periodical essays was not, at first, equal to their merit. They had not, like the Spectators, the art of charming by va-

riety; and, indeed, how could it be expected? The wits of Queen Anne's reign sent their contributions to the Spectator, and Johnson stood alone. "A stagecoach," says Sir Richard Steele, "must go forward on stated days, whether there are passengers or not." So it was with the Rambler, every Tuesday and Saturday, for two years. In this collection Johnson is the great moral teacher of his countrymen; his essays form a body of ethics; the observations on life and manners are acute and instructive; and the papers, professedly critical, serve to promote the cause of literature. It must, however, be acknowledged, that a settled gloom hangs over the author's mind; and all the essays, except eight or ten, coming from the same fountain-head, no wonder that they have the raciness of the soil from which they sprang. Of this uniformity Johnson was sensible. He used to say, that if he had joined a friend or two, who would have been able to intermix papers of a sprightly turn, the collection would have been more miscellaneous, and, by consequence, more agreeable to the generality of readers.

It is remarkable, that the pomp of diction which has been objected to Johnson was first assumed in the Rambler. His dictionary was going on at the same time; and, in the course of that work, as he grew familiar with technical and scholastic words, he thought that the bulk of his readers were equally learned; or, at least, would admire the splendour and dignity of the style. And yet it is well known that he praised in Cowley the easy and unaffected structure of the sentences. Cowley may be placed at the head of those who cultivated a clear and natural style. Dryden, Tillotson, and Sir William Temple followed. Addison, Swift, and Pope, with more correctness, carried our language wellnigh to perfection. Of Addison, Johnson was used to say, *He is the Raphael of essay writers*. How he differed

so widely from such elegant models is a problem not to be solved, unless it be true that he took an early tincture from the writers of the last century, particularly Sir Thomas Browne. Hence the peculiarities of his style, new combinations, sentences of an unusual structure, and words derived from the learned languages. His own account of the matter is, "When common words were less pleasing to the ear or less distinct in their signification, I familiarized the terms of philosophy by applying them to popular ideas." But he forgot the observation of Dryden: *If too many foreign words are poured in upon us, it looks as if they were designed, not to assist the natives, but to conquer them.* There is, it must be admitted, a swell of language often out of all proportion to the sentiment; but there is, in general, a fullness of mind, and the thought seems to expand with the sound of the words. Determined to discard colloquial barbarisms and licentious idioms, he forgot the elegant simplicity that distinguishes the writings of Addison. He had what Locke calls a roundabout view of his subject; and though he was never tainted, like many modern wits, with the ambition of shining in paradox, he may fairly be called an ORIGINAL THINKER. His reading was extensive. He treasured in his mind whatever was worthy of notice, but he added to it from his own meditation. Addison was not so profound a thinker. He was *born to write, converse, and live with ease*; and he found an early patron in Lord Somers. He depended, however, more upon a fine taste than the vigour of his mind. His Latin poetry shows that he relished, with a just selection, all the refined and delicate beauties of the Roman classics; and when he cultivated his native language, no wonder that he formed that graceful style which has been so justly admired; simple, yet elegant; adorned, yet never overwrought; rich in allusion, yet pure and perspicuous; correct without labour; and, though some-

times deficient in strength, yet always musical. His essays, in general, are on the surface of life; if ever original, it was in pieces of humour. Sir Roger de Coverly and the Tory Fox-hunter need not to be mentioned. Johnson had a fund of humour, but he did not know it: nor was he willing to descend to the familiar idiom and the variety of diction which that mode of composition required. Addison possessed an unclouded imagination, alive to the first objects of nature and of art. He reaches the sublime without any apparent effort. When he tells us, "If we consider the fixed stars as so many oceans of flame, that are each of them attended with a different set of planets; if we still discover new firmaments and new lights that are sunk farther in those unfathomable depths of ether, we are lost in a labyrinth of suns and worlds, and confounded with the magnificence and immensity of nature;" the ease with which this passage rises to unaffected grandeur, is the secret charm that captivates the reader. Johnson is always lofty; he seems, to use Dryden's phrase, to be o'er-informed with meaning, and his words do not appear to himself adequate to his conception. He moves in state, and his periods are always harmonious. His *Oriental Tales* are in the true style of Eastern magnificence, and yet none of them are so much admired as the *Visions of Mirza*. In matters of criticism, Johnson is never the echo of preceding writers. He thinks and decides for himself. If we except the essays on the *Pleasures of Imagination*, Addison cannot be called a philosophical critic. His moral essays are beautiful; but in that province nothing can exceed the *Rambler*, though Johnson used to say, that the *Essay on the Burdens of Mankind* (in the *Spectator*, No. 558) was the most exquisite he had ever read. Talking of himself, Johnson said, "Topham Beauclerk has wit, and everything comes from him with ease; but when I say a good thing, I seem to labour."

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When we compare him with Addison, the contrast is still stronger. Addison lends grace and ornament to truth; Johnson gives it force and energy. Addison makes virtue amiable; Johnson represents it as an awful duty. Addison insinuates himself with an air of modesty; Johnson commands like a dictator; but a dictator in his splendid robes, not labouring at the plough. Addison is the Jupiter of Virgil, with placid serenity talking to Venus:

“Vultu, quo cælum tempestatesque serenat.”

Johnson is Jupiter tonans; he darts his lightning and rolls his thunder in the cause of virtue and piety. The language seems to fall short of ideas; he pours along, familiarizing the terms of philosophy with bold inversions and sonorous periods; but we may apply to him what Pope has said of Homer: “It is the sentiment that swells and fills out the diction, which rises with it, and forms itself about it; like glass in the furnace, which grows to a greater magnitude as the breath within is more powerful and the heat more intense.”

It is not the design of this comparison to decide between these two eminent writers. In matters of taste every reader will choose for himself. Johnson is always profound, and, of course, gives the fatigue of thinking. Addison charms while he instructs; and writing, as he always does, a pure, an elegant, and idiomatic style, he may be pronounced the safest model for imitation.

The essays written by Johnson in the *Adventurer* may be called a continuation of the *Rambler*. The *Idler*, in order to be consistent with the assumed character, is written with abated vigour, in a style of ease and unlaboured elegance. It is the *Odyssey* after the *Iliad*. Intense thinking would not become the *Idler*. The first number presents a well-drawn portrait of an idler, and from that character no deviation could be made. Accordingly, Johnson forgets

his austere manner, and plays us into sense. He still continues his lectures on human life, but he adverts to common occurrences, and is often content with the topic of the day.

"Rasselas," says Sir John Hawkins, "is a specimen of our language scarcely to be paralleled; it is written in a style refined to a degree of *immaculate purity*, and displays the whole force of *turgid* eloquence." One cannot but smile at this encomium. Rasselas is undoubtedly both elegant and sublime. It is a view of human life, displayed, it must be owned, in gloomy colours. The author's natural melancholy, depressed, at the time, by the approaching dissolution of his mother, darkened the picture. A tale that should keep curiosity awake by the artifice of unexpected incidents, was not the design of a mind pregnant with better things. He who reads the heads of the chapters will find that it is not a course of adventures that invites him forward, but a discussion of interesting questions; Reflections on Human Life; the History of *Imlac*, the Man of Learning; a Dissertation upon Poetry; the Character of a wise and happy Man, who discourses with energy on the government of the passions, and, on a sudden, when Death deprives him of his daughter, forgets all his maxims of wisdom and the eloquence that adorned them, yielding to the stroke of affliction with all the vehemence of the bitterest anguish. It is by pictures of life and profound moral reflection that expectation is engaged and gratified throughout the work. The History of the Mad Astronomer, who imagines that, for five years, he possessed the regulation of the weather, and that the sun passed from tropic to tropic by his direction, represents in striking colours the sad effect of a distempered imagination. It becomes the more affecting when we recollect that it proceeds from one who lived in fear of the same dreadful visitation; from one who says emphatically,

"Of the uncertainties in our present state, the most dreadful and alarming is the uncertain continuance of reason." The inquiry into the cause of madness, and the dangerous prevalence of imagination, till in time some particular train of ideas fixes the attention, and the mind recurs constantly to the favourite conception, is carried on in a strain of acute observation; but it leaves us room to think that the author was transcribing from his own apprehensions. The discourse on the nature of the soul gives us all that philosophy knows, not without a tincture of superstition.

The Dictionary does not properly fall within the province of this essay. He who reads the close of the preface without acknowledging the force of the pathetic and sublime, must have more insensibility in his composition than usually falls to the share of a man. The work itself, though in some instances abuse has been loud, and in others malice has endeavoured to undermine its fame, still remains the MOUNT ATLAS of English literature.

"Though storms and tempests thunder on its brow,
And oceans break their billows at its feet,
It stands unmoved, and glories in its height."

That Johnson was eminently qualified for the office of a commentator on Shakspeare, no man can doubt; but it was an office which he never cordially embraced. The public expected more than he had diligence to perform; and yet his edition has been the ground on which every subsequent commentator has chosen to build. The general observations at the end of the several plays, with great elegance and precision, give a summary view of each drama. The preface is a tract of great erudition and philosophical criticism.

Johnson's political pamphlets, whatever was his motive for writing them, whether gratitude for his pension, or the solicitation of men in power, did not

support the cause for which they were undertaken. They are written in a style truly harmonious, and with his usual dignity of language. When it is said that he advanced positions repugnant to the *common rights of mankind*, the virulence of party may be suspected. It is perhaps true, that in the clamour raised throughout the kingdom, Johnson overheated his mind; but he was a friend to the rights of man, and he was greatly superior to the littleness of spirit that might incline him to advance what he did not think and firmly believe. On the subject of the Falkland Islands, the fine dissuasive from too hastily involving the world in the calamities of war, must extort applause even from the party that wished, at that time, for the scenes of tumult and commotion. It was in the same pamphlet that Johnson offered battle to Junius; a writer who, by the uncommon elegance of his style, charmed every reader. Junius fought in the dark; he saw his enemy and had his full blow, while he himself remained safe in obscurity. But let us not, said Johnson, mistake the venom of the shaft for the vigour of the bow. The keen invective which he published on that occasion promised a paper war between two combatants who knew the use of their weapons. But Junius, whatever was his reason, never returned to the field.

The account of his journey to the Hebrides, or Western Isles of Scotland, is a model for such as shall hereafter relate their travels. The author did not visit that part of the world in the character of an antiquary, to amuse us with wonders taken from the dark and fabulous ages; nor as a mathematician, to measure a degree, and settle the longitude and latitude of the several islands. Those who expected such information expected what was never intended. *In every work regard the writer's end.* Johnson went to see men and manners, modes of life, and the progress of civilization. His remarks

are so artfully blended with the rapidity and elegance of his narrative, that the reader is inclined to wish, as Johnson did with regard to Gray, that *to travel and to tell his travels had been more of his employment.*

As to Johnson's Parliamentary Debates, nothing with propriety can be said in this place. They are collected in two volumes by Mr. Stockdale, and the flow of eloquence which runs through the several speeches is sufficiently known.

We now come to the Lives of the Poets, a work undertaken at the age of seventy, yet the most brilliant, and certainly the most popular, of all our author's writings. For this performance he needed little preparation. Attentive always to the history of letters, and by his own natural bias fond of biography, he was the more willing to embrace the proposition of the booksellers. He was versed in the whole body of English poetry, and his rules of criticism were settled with precision. The dissertation, in the Life of Cowley, on the metaphysical poets of the last century, has the attraction of novelty as well as sound observation. The writers who followed Dr. Donne went in quest of something better than truth and nature. As Sancho says in Don Quixote, they wanted better bread than is made with wheat. They took pains to bewilder themselves, and were ingenious for no other purpose than to err. In Johnson's review of Cowley's works, false wit is detected in all its shapes, and the Gothic taste for glittering conceits and far-fetched allusions is exploded, never, it is hoped, to revive again.

It is now time to close this Essay. In the progress of the work, feeble as it may be, the author thought himself performing the last human office to the memory of a friend whom he loved, esteemed, and honoured.

In these Memoirs he has been anxious to give

the features of the man and the true character of the author. He has not suffered the hand of partiality to colour his excellences with too much warmth, nor has he endeavoured to throw his singularities too much into the shade. Dr. Johnson's failings may well be forgiven for the sake of his virtues. His defects were spots in the sun. His piety, his kind affections, and the goodness of his heart, present an example worthy of imitation. His works still remain a monument of genius and of learning.

ESSAYS, &c.

SPRING.

“ Now every field, now every tree is green ;
Now genial Nature's fairest face is seen.”
VIRG.—ELPHINSTON'S *Trans.*

EVERY man is sufficiently discontented with some circumstances of his present state to suffer his imagination to range more or less in quest of future happiness, and to fix upon some point of time, in which, by the removal of the inconvenience which now perplexes him, or acquisition of the advantage which he at present wants, he shall find the condition of his life very much improved.

When this time, which is too often expected with great impatience, at last arrives, it generally comes without the blessing for which it was desired ; but we solace ourselves with some new prospect, and press forward again with equal eagerness.

It is lucky for a man in whom this temper prevails when he turns his hopes upon things wholly out of his own power ; since he forbears then to precipitate his affairs for the sake of the great event that is to complete his felicity, and waits for the blissful hour with less neglect of the measures necessary to be taken in the mean time.

I have long known a person of this temper, who indulged his dream of happiness with less hurt to himself than such chimerical wishes commonly produce, and adjusted his schemes with such address that his hopes were in full bloom three parts of the

year, and in the other part never wholly blasted. Many, perhaps, would be desirous of learning by what means he procured to himself such a cheap and lasting satisfaction. It was gained by a constant practice of referring the removal of all his uneasiness to the coming of the next spring; if his health was impaired, the spring would restore it; if what he wanted was at a high price, its value would fall in the spring.

The spring, indeed, did often come without any of these effects, but he was always certain that the next would be more propitious; nor was ever convinced that the present spring would fail him before the middle of summer; for he always talked of the spring as coming till it was past, and when it was once past, every one agreed with him that it was coming.

By long converse with this man, I am, perhaps, brought to feel immoderate pleasure in the contemplation of this delightful season; but I have the satisfaction of finding many, whom it can be no shame to resemble, infected with the same enthusiasm; for there is, I believe, scarce any poet of eminence who has not left some testimony of his fondness for the flowers, the zephyrs, and the warblers of the spring. Nor has the most luxuriant imagination been able to describe the serenity and happiness of the golden age, otherwise than by giving a perpetual spring as the highest reward of uncorrupted innocence.

There is, indeed, something inexpressibly pleasing in the annual renovation of the world and the new display of the treasures of nature. The cold and darkness of winter, with the naked deformity of every object on which we turn our eyes, make us rejoice at the succeeding season, as well for what we have escaped as for what we may enjoy; and every budding flower, which a warm situation brings

early to our view, is considered by us as a messenger to notify the approach of more joyous days.

The spring affords to a mind, so free from the disturbance of cares or passions as to be vacant to calm amusements, almost everything that our present state makes us capable of enjoying. The variegated verdure of the fields and woods, the succession of grateful odours, the voice of pleasure pouring out its notes on every side, with the gladness apparently conceived by every animal, from the growth of his food and the clemency of the weather, throw over the whole earth an air of gaiety, significantly expressed by the smile of nature.

Yet there are men to whom these scenes are able to give no delight, and who hurry away from all the varieties of rural beauty, to lose their hours and divert their thoughts by cards or assemblies, a tavern dinner, or the prattle of the day.

It may be laid down as a position which will seldom deceive, that when a man cannot bear his own company there is something wrong. He must fly from himself, either because he feels a tediousness in life from the equipoise of an empty mind, which, having no tendency to one motion more than another but as it is impelled by some external power, must always have recourse to foreign objects; or he must be afraid of the intrusion of some unpleasing ideas, and perhaps is struggling to escape from the remembrance of a loss, the fear of a calamity, or some other thought of greater horror.

Those whom sorrow incapacitates to enjoy the pleasures of contemplation, may properly apply to such diversions, provided they are innocent, as lay strong hold on the attention; and those whom fear of any future affliction chains down to misery, must endeavour to obviate the danger.

My considerations shall, on this occasion, be turned on such as are burdensome to themselves merely because they want subjects for reflection,

and to whom the volume of nature is thrown open without affording them pleasure or instruction, because they never learned to read the characters.

A French author has advanced this seeming paradox, *very few men know how to take a walk*; and indeed it is true, that few know how to take a walk with a prospect of any other pleasure than the same company would have afforded them at home.

There are animals that borrow their colour from the neighbouring body, and consequently vary their hue as they happen to change their place. In like manner, it ought to be the endeavour of every man to derive his reflections from the objects about him; for it is to no purpose that he alters his position, if his attention continues fixed to the same point. The mind should be kept open to the access of every new idea, and so far disengaged from the predominance of particular thoughts as easily to accommodate itself to occasional entertainment.

A man that has formed this habit of turning every new object to his entertainment, finds in the productions of nature an inexhaustible stock of materials upon which he can employ himself without any temptations to envy or malevolence; faults, perhaps, seldom totally avoided by those whose judgment is much exercised upon the works of art. He has always a certain prospect of discovering new reasons for adoring the sovereign Author of the universe, and probable hopes of making some discovery of benefit to others, or of profit to himself. There is no doubt but many vegetables and animals have qualities that might be of great use, to the knowledge of which there is not required much force of penetration or fatigue of study, but only frequent experiments and close attention. What is said by the chymists of their darling mercury, is perhaps true of every body through the whole creation, that if a thousand lives should be spent upon it, all its properties would not be found out.

Mankind must necessarily be diversified by various tastes, since life affords and requires such multiplicity of employments, and a nation of naturalists is neither to be hoped nor desired; but it is surely not improper to point out a fresh amusement to those who languish in health and repine in plenty for want of some source of diversion that may be less easily exhausted, and to inform the multitudes of both sexes, who are burdened with every new day, that there are many shows which they have not seen.

He that enlarges his curiosity after the works of nature, demonstrably multiplies the inlets to happiness; and, therefore, the younger part of my readers, to whom I dedicate this vernal speculation, must excuse me for calling upon them to make use at once of the spring of the year and the spring of life; to acquire, while their minds may be yet impressed with new images, a love of innocent pleasures, and an ardour for useful knowledge; and to remember, that a blighted spring makes a barren year, and that the vernal flowers, however beautiful and gay, are only intended by nature as preparatives to autumnal fruits.

DISCONTENT A PRINCIPAL CAUSE OF UNHAPPINESS.

“Active in indolence, abroad we roam
In quest of happiness which dwells at home:
With vain pursuits fatigued, at length you'll find,
No place excludes it from an equal mind.”

HOB.—ELPHINSTON'S *Trans.*

THAT man should never suffer his happiness to depend upon external circumstances, is one of the

chief precepts of the stoical philosophy ; a precept, indeed, which that lofty sect has extended beyond the condition of human life, and in which some of them seem to have comprised an utter exclusion of all corporeal pain and pleasure from the regard or attention of a wise man.

Such *sapientia insaniens*, as Horace calls the doctrine of another sect, such extravagance of philosophy, can want neither authority nor argument for its confutation : it is overthrown by the experience of every hour, and the powers of nature rise up against it. But we may very properly inquire, how near to this exalted state it is in our power to approach ; how far we can exempt ourselves from outward influences, and secure to our minds a state of tranquillity : for though the boast of absolute independence is ridiculous and vain, yet a mean flexibility to every impulse, and a patient submission to the tyranny of casual troubles, is below the dignity of that mind which, however depraved or weakened, boasts its derivation from a celestial original, and hopes for a union with infinite goodness and unvariable felicity :

“ Unless the soul, to vice a thrall,
Desert her own original.”

The necessity of erecting ourselves to some degree of intellectual dignity, and of perceiving resources of pleasure which may not be wholly at the mercy of accident, is never more apparent than when we turn our eyes upon those whom fortune has let loose to their own conduct ; who, not being chained down by their condition to a regular and stated allotment of their hours, are obliged to find themselves business or diversion, and, having nothing within that can entertain or employ them, are compelled to try all the arts of destroying time.

The numberless expedients practised by this class of mortals to alleviate the burden of life, are not less

shameful, nor, perhaps, much less pitiable, than those to which a trader on the edge of bankruptcy is reduced. I have seen melancholy overspread a whole family at the disappointment of a party for cards; and when, after the proposal of a thousand schemes, and the despatch of the footman upon a hundred messages, they have submitted, with gloomy resignation, to the misfortune of passing one evening in conversation with each other, on a sudden, such are the revolutions of the world, an unexpected visiter has brought them relief, acceptable as provision to a starving city, and enabled them to hold out till the next day.

The general remedy of those who are uneasy without knowing the cause, is change of place; they are willing to imagine that their pain is the consequence of some local inconvenience, and endeavour to fly from it, as children from their shadows; always hoping for some more satisfactory delight from every new scene, and always returning home with disappointment and complaints.

Who can look upon this kind of infatuation without reflecting on those that suffer under the dreadful symptoms of canine madness, termed by the physicians the *dread of water*? These miserable wretches, unable to drink though burning with thirst, are sometimes known to try various contortions or inclinations of the body, flattering themselves that they can swallow in one posture that liquor which they find in another to repel their lips.

Yet such folly is not peculiar to the thoughtless or ignorant, but sometimes seizes those minds which seem most exempted from it by variety of attainments, quickness of penetration, or severity of judgment; and, indeed, the pride of wit and knowledge is often mortified by finding that they confer no security against the common errors which mislead the weakest and meanest of mankind.

These reflections arose in my mind upon the re-

membrance of a passage in Cowley's preface to his poems, where, however exalted by genius and enlarged by study, he informs us of a scheme of happiness to which the imagination of a girl, upon the loss of her first lover, could have scarcely given way; but which he seems to have indulged till he had totally forgotten its absurdity, and would probably have put in execution had he been hindered only by his reason.

"My desire," says he, "has been for some years past, though the execution has been accidentally diverted, and does still vehemently continue, to retire myself to some of our American plantations, not to seek for gold or enrich myself with the traffic of those parts, which is the end of most men that travel thither, but to forsake this world for ever, with all the vanities and vexations of it, and to bury myself there in some obscure retreat, but not without the consolation of letters and philosophy."

Such was the chimerical provision which Cowley had made in his own mind for the quiet of his remaining life, which he seems to recommend to posterity, since there is no other reason for disclosing it. Surely no stronger instance can be given of a persuasion that content was the inhabitant of particular regions, and that a man might set sail with a fair wind, and leave behind him all his cares, encumbrances, and calamities.

If he travelled so far with no other purpose than to *bury himself in some obscure retreat*, he might have found in his own country innumerable coverts sufficiently dark to have concealed the genius of Cowley; for, whatever might be his opinion of the opportunity with which he might be summoned back into public life, a short experience would have convinced him that privation is easier than acquisition, and that it would require little continuance to free himself from the intrusion of the world. There is pride enough in the human heart to prevent much

desire of acquaintance with a man by whom we are sure to be neglected, however his reputation for science or virtue may excite our curiosity or esteem ; so that the lover of retirement needs not be afraid lest the respect of strangers should overwhelm him with visits. Even those to whom he has formerly been known will very patiently support his absence, when they have tried a little to live without him, and found new diversions for those moments which his company contributed to exhilarate.

It was, perhaps, ordained by Providence, to hinder us from tyrannizing over one another, that no individual should be of such importance as to cause, by his retirement or death, any chasm in the world. And Cowley had conversed to little purpose with mankind if he had never remarked how soon the useful friend, the gay companion, and the favoured lover, when once they are removed from before the sight, give way to the succession of new objects.

The privacy, therefore, of his hermitage might have been safe enough from violation, though he had chosen it within the limits of his native island ; he might have found here preservatives against the *vanities* and *vexations* of the world, not less efficacious than those which the woods or fields of America could afford him : but, having once his mind imbittered with disgust, he conceived it impossible to be far enough from the cause of his uneasiness ; and was posting away with the expedition of a coward, who, for want of venturing to look behind him, thinks the enemy perpetually at his heels.

When he was interrupted by company or fatigued with business, he so strongly imaged to himself the happiness of leisure and retreat, that he determined to enjoy them for the future without interruption, and to exclude for ever all that could deprive him of his darling satisfaction. He forgot, in the vehemence of desire, that solitude and quiet owe their pleasures to those miseries which he was so studi-

ous to obviate : for such are the vicissitudes of the world, through all its parts, that day and night, labour and rest, hurry and retirement, endear each other ; such are the changes that keep the mind in action ; we desire, we pursue, we obtain, we are satiated ; we desire something else, and begin a new pursuit.

If he had proceeded in his project, and fixed his habitation in the most delightful part of the New World, it may be doubted whether his distance from the *vanities* of life would have enabled him to keep away the *vexations*. It is common for a man who feels pain to fancy that he could bear it better in any other part. Cowley, having known the troubles and perplexities of a particular condition, readily persuaded himself that nothing worse was to be found, and that every alteration would bring some improvement : he never suspected that the cause of his unhappiness was within ; that his own passions were not sufficiently regulated, and that he was harassed by his own impatience, which could never be without something to awaken it, would accompany him over the sea, and find its way to his American elysium. He would, upon the trial, have been soon convinced, that the fountain of content must spring up in the mind ; and that he who has so little knowledge of human nature as to seek happiness by changing anything but his own dispositions, will waste his life in fruitless efforts, and multiply the griefs which he purposes to remove.*

* See Dr. Johnson's Life of Cowley, vol. ix p. 10-16.

RELIGIOUS ADVANTAGES OF SOLITUDE.

"Oh thou whose power o'er moving worlds presides,
Whose voice created and whose wisdom guides,
On darkling man in pure effulgence shine,
And cheer the clouded mind with light divine.
'Tis thine alone to calm the pious breast
With silent confidence and holy rest:
From thee, great God, we spring, to thee we tend,
Path, motive, guide, original, and end."

BOETHIUS.

THE love of retirement has in all ages adhered closely to those minds which have been most enlarged by knowledge or elevated by genius. Those who enjoyed everything generally supposed to confer happiness, have been forced to seek it in the shades of privacy. Though they possessed both power and riches, and were therefore surrounded by men who considered it as their chief interest to remove from them everything that might offend their ease or interrupt their pleasure, they have soon felt the languors of satiety, and found themselves unable to pursue the race of life without frequent respirations of intermediate solitude.

To produce this disposition, nothing appears requisite but quick sensibility and active imagination; for, though not devoted to virtue or science, the man whose faculties enable him to make ready comparisons of the present with the past, will find such a constant recurrence of the same pleasures and troubles, the same expectations and disappointments, that he will gladly snatch an hour of retreat, to let his thoughts expatiate at large, and seek for that variety in his own ideas which the objects of sense cannot afford him.

Nor will greatness or abundance exempt him

from the importunities of this desire, since, if he is born to think, he cannot restrain himself from a thousand inquiries and speculations, which he must pursue by his own reason, and which the splendour of his condition can only hinder: for those who are most exalted above dependance or control, are yet condemned to pay so large a tribute of their time to custom, ceremony, and popularity, that, according to the Greek proverb, no man in the house is more a slave than the master.

When a king asked Euclid, the mathematician, whether he could not explain his art to him in a more compendious manner, he was answered that there was no royal way to geometry. Other things may be seized by might or purchased with money, but knowledge is to be gained only by study, and study to be prosecuted only in retirement.

These are some of the motives which have had power to sequester kings and heroes from the crowds that soothed them with flatteries or inspired them with acclamations; but their efficacy seems confined to the higher mind, and to operate little upon the common classes of mankind, to whose conceptions the present assemblage of things is adequate, and who seldom range beyond those entertainments and vexations which solicit their attention by pressing on their senses.

But there is a universal reason for some stated intervals of solitude, which the institutions of the church call upon me now especially to mention; a reason which extends as wide as moral duty or the hopes of Divine favour in a future state, and which ought to influence all ranks of life and all degrees of intellect, since none can imagine themselves not comprehended in its obligation but such as determine to set their Maker at defiance by obstinate wickedness, or whose enthusiastic security of his approbation places them above external ordinances and all human means of improvement.

The great task of him who conducts his life by the precepts of religion, is to make the future predominate over the present, to impress upon his mind so strong a sense of the importance of obedience to the Divine will, of the value of the rewards promised to virtue, and the terrors of the punishment denounced against crimes, as may overbear all the temptations which temporal hope or fear can bring in his way, and enable him to bid equal defiance to joy and sorrow, to turn away at one time from the allurements of ambition, and push forward at another against the threats of calamity.

It is not without reason that the apostle represents our passage through this stage of our existence by images drawn from the alarms and solicitude of a military life; for we are placed in such a state that almost everything about us conspires against our chief interest. We are in danger from whatever can get possession of our thoughts; all that can excite in us either pain or pleasure, has a tendency to obstruct the way that leads to happiness, and either to turn us aside or retard our progress.

Our senses, our appetites, and our passions are our lawful and faithful guides in most things that relate solely to this life; and, therefore, by the hourly necessity of consulting them, we gradually sink into an implicit submission and habitual confidence. Every act of compliance with their motions facilitates a second compliance; every new step towards depravity is made with less reluctance than the former, and thus the descent to life merely sensual is perpetually accelerated.

The senses have not only that advantage over conscience which things necessary must always have over things chosen, but they have likewise a kind of prescription in their favour. We feared pain much earlier than we apprehended guilt, and were delighted with the sensations of pleasure be-

fore we had capacities to be charmed with the beauty of rectitude. To this power, thus early established and incessantly increasing, it must be remembered that almost every man has, in some part of his life, added new strength by a voluntary or negligent subjection of himself; for who is there that has not instigated his appetites by indulgence, or suffered them, by an unresisting neutrality, to enlarge their dominion and multiply their demands?

From the necessity of dispossessing the sensitive faculties of the influence which they must naturally gain by this preoccupation of the soul, arises that conflict between opposite desires in the first endeavours after a religious life; which, however enthusiastically it may have been described or however contemptuously ridiculed, will naturally be felt in some degree, though varied without end by different tempers of mind and innumerable circumstances of health or condition, greater or less fervour, more or fewer temptations to relapse.

From the perpetual necessity of consulting the animal faculties in our provision for the present life, arises the difficulty of withstanding their impulses, even in cases where they ought to be of no weight; for the motions of sense are instantaneous; its objects strike unsought; we are accustomed to follow its directions, and therefore often submit to the sentence without examining the authority of the judge.

Thus it appears, upon a philosophical estimate, that supposing the mind at any certain time in an equipoise between the pleasures of this life and the hopes of futurity, present objects falling more frequently into the scale would in time predominate, and our regard for an invisible state would lose all its activity, and become absolutely without effect.

To prevent this dreadful event, the balance is put into our own hands, and we have power to transfer the weight to either side. The motives to a life of

holiness are infinite, not less than the favour or anger of Omnipotence, not less than the eternity of happiness or misery. But these can only influence our conduct as they gain our attention, which the business or diversions of the world are always calling off by contrary attractions.

The great art, therefore, of piety, and the end for which all the rites of religion seem to be instituted, is the perpetual renovation of the motives to virtue, by a voluntary employment of our mind in the contemplation of its excellence, its importance, and its necessity, which, in proportion as they are more frequently and more willingly revolved, gain a more forcible and permanent influence, till in time they become the reigning ideas, the standing principles of action, and the test by which everything proposed to the judgment is rejected or approved.

To facilitate this change of our affections, it is necessary that we weaken the temptations of the world by retiring at certain seasons from it; for its influence, arising only from its presence, is much lessened when it becomes the object of solitary meditation. A constant residence amid noise and pleasure inevitably obliterates the impressions of piety, and a frequent abstraction of ourselves into a state where this life, like the next, operates only upon the reason, will reinstate religion in its just authority, even without those irradiations from above, the hope of which I have no intention to withdraw from the sincere and the diligent.

This is that conquest of the world and of ourselves which has been always considered as the perfection of human nature; and this is only to be obtained by fervent prayer, steady resolutions, and frequent retirement from folly and vanity, from the cares of avarice and the joys of intemperance, from the lulling sounds of deceitful flattery and the tempting sight of prosperous wickedness.

PURITY OF THOUGHT ESSENTIAL TO VIRTUE.

"For he that but conceives a crime in thought,
Contracts the danger of an actual fault."

JUV.—CREECH'S *Trans.*

IF the most active and industrious of mankind were able, at the close of life, to recollect distinctly his past moments, and distribute them in a regular account according to the manner in which they had been spent, it is scarcely to be imagined how few would be marked out to the mind by any permanent or visible effects, how small a proportion his real action would bear to his seeming possibilities of action, how many chasms he would find of wide and continued vacuity, and how many interstitial spaces unfilled, even in the most tumultuous hurries of business and the most eager vehemence of pursuit.

It is said by modern philosophers, that not only the great globes of matter are thinly scattered through the universe, but the hardest bodies are so porous, that if all matter were compressed to perfect solidity, it might be contained in a cube of a few feet. In like manner, if all the employment of life were crowded into the time which it really occupied, perhaps a few weeks, days, or hours would be sufficient for its accomplishment, so far as the mind was engaged in the performance. For such is the inequality of our corporeal to our intellectual faculties, that we contrive in minutes what we execute in years, and the soul often stands an idle spectator of the labour of the hands and expedition of the feet.

For this reason the ancient generals often found

themselves at leisure to pursue the study of philosophy in the camp; and Lucan, with historical veracity, makes Cæsar relate of himself, that he noted the revolutions of the stars in the midst of preparations for battle.

“Amid the storms of war, with curious eyes
I trace the planets, and survey the skies.”

That the soul always exerts her peculiar powers with greater or less force, is very probable, though the common occasions of our present condition require but a small part of that incessant cogitation; and by the natural frame of our bodies and the general combination of the world, we are so frequently condemned to inactivity, that as through all our time we are thinking, so for a great part of our time we can only think.

Lest a power so restless should be either unprofitably or hurtfully employed, and the superfluities of intellect run to waste, it is no vain speculation to consider how we may govern our thoughts, restrain them from irregular notions, or confine them from boundless dissipation.

How the understanding is best conducted to the knowledge of science, by what steps it is to be led forward in its pursuit, how it is to be cured of its defects and habituated to new studies, has been the inquiry of many acute and learned men, whose observations I shall not either adopt or censure: my purpose being to consider the moral discipline of the mind, and to promote the increase of virtue rather than of learning.

This inquiry seems to have been neglected for want of remembering that all action has its origin in the mind, and that, therefore, to suffer the thoughts to be vitiated is to poison the fountains of morality: irregular desires will produce licentious practices; what men allow themselves to wish they will soon believe; and they will be at last incited

to execute what they please themselves with contriving.

For this reason, the casuists of the Roman Church, who gain, by profession, great opportunities of knowing human nature, have generally determined that what it is, a crime to do it is a crime to think.* Since by revolving with pleasure the facility, safety, or advantage of a wicked deed, a man soon begins to find his constancy relax and his detestation soften; the happiness of success, glittering before him, withdraws his attention from the atrociousness of the guilt, and acts are at last confidently perpetrated, of which the first conception only crept into the mind, disguised in pleasing complications, and permitted rather than invited.

No man has ever been drawn to crimes by love or jealousy, envy or hatred, but he can tell how easily he might at first have repelled the temptation; how readily his mind would have obeyed a call to any other object, and how weak his passion has been after some casual avocation, till he has recalled it again to his heart, and revived the viper by too warm a fondness.

Such, therefore, is the importance of keeping reason a constant guard over imagination, that we have otherwise no security for our virtue, but may corrupt our hearts in the most recluse solitude, with more pernicious and tyrannical appetites and wishes than the commerce of the world will generally produce: for we are easily shocked by crimes which appear at once in their full magnitude; but the gradual growth of our own wickedness, endeared by interest and palliated by all the artifices of self-deceit, gives us time to form distinctions in our own favour; and reason by degrees submits to absurdity, as the eye is in time accommodated to darkness.

* This was determined long before their time. See Matt., vi., 28.—C.

In this disease of the soul, it is of the utmost importance to apply remedies at the beginning ; and therefore I shall endeavour to show what thoughts are to be rejected or improved, as they regard the past, present, or future ; in hopes that some may be awakened to caution and vigilance, who, perhaps, indulge themselves in dangerous dreams ; so much the more dangerous, because, being yet only dreams, they are concluded innocent.

The recollection of the past is only useful by way of provision for the future ; and, therefore, in reviewing all occurrences that fall under a religious consideration, it is proper that a man stop at the first thoughts, to remark how he was led thither, and why he continues the reflection. If he is dwelling with delight upon a stratagem of successful fraud, a night of licentious riot, or an intrigue of guilty pleasure, let him summon off his imagination as from an unlawful pursuit, expel those passages from his remembrance, of which, though he cannot seriously approve them, the pleasure overpowers the guilt, and refer them to a future hour, when they may be considered with greater safety. Such an hour will certainly come : for the impressions of past pleasure are always lessening, but the sense of guilt, which respects futurity, continues the same.

The serious and impartial retrospect of our conduct is indisputably necessary to the confirmation or recovery of virtue, and is therefore recommended under the name of self-examination, by divines, as the first act previous to repentance. It is, indeed, of so great use, that without it we should always be to begin life, be seduced for ever by the same fallacies. But, in order that we may not lose the advantage of our experience, we must endeavour to see everything in its proper form, and excite in ourselves those sentiments which the great Author of nature has decreed the concomitants or fol-

lowers of good or bad actions. ' Let not sleep," says Pythagoras, "fall upon thy eyes till thou hast thrice reviewed the transactions of the past day. Where have I turned aside from rectitude? What have I been doing? What have I left undone which I ought to have done? Begin thus from the first act, and proceed; and, in conclusion, at the ill which thou hast done be troubled, and rejoice for the good."

Our thoughts on present things being determined by the objects before us, fall not under those indulgences or excursions which I am now considering. But I cannot forbear, under this head, to caution pious and tender minds, that are disturbed by the interruptions of wicked imaginations, against too great dejection and too anxious alarms; for thoughts are only criminal when they are first chosen and then voluntarily continued.

" Evil into the mind of God or man
May come and go, so unapproved, and leave
No spot or stain behind."*

In futurity chiefly are the snares lodged by which the imagination is entangled. Futurity is the proper abode of hope and fear, with all their train and progeny of subordinate apprehensions and desires. In futurity events and chances are yet floating at large, without apparent connexion with their causes, and we therefore easily indulge the liberty of gratifying ourselves with a pleasing choice. To pick and cull among possible advantages is, as the civil law terms it, *in vacuum venire*, to take what belongs to nobody; but it has this hazard in it, that we shall be unwilling to quit what we have seized, though an owner should be found. It is easy to think on that which may be gained, till at last we resolve to gain it, and to image the happiness of particular conditions till we can be easy in no other. We ought,

* Milton.

at least, to let our desires fix upon nothing in another's power for the sake of our quiet, or in another's possession for the sake of our innocence. When a man finds himself led, though by a train of honest sentiments, to wish for that to which he has no right, he should start back as from a pitfall covered with flowers. He that fancies he should benefit the public more in a great station than the man that fills it, will in time imagine it an act of virtue to supplant him; and as opposition readily kindles into hatred, his eagerness to do that good to which he is not called, will betray him to crimes which in his original scheme were never proposed.

He, therefore, that would govern his actions by the laws of virtue, must regulate his thoughts by those of reason; he must keep guilt from the recesses of his heart, and remember that the pleasures of fancy and the emotions of desire are more dangerous as they are more hidden, since they escape the awe of observation, and operate equally in every situation, without the concurrence of external opportunities.

THE PASSIONATE MAN DESCRIBED.

"Yet oh! remember, nor the god of wine,
Nor *Pythian Phœbus* from his inmost shrine,
Nor *Dindymene*, nor her priests possess'd,
Can with their sounding cymbals shake the breast,
Like furious anger."

HOR.—FRANCIS'S *Trans.*

THE maxim which Periander of Corinth, one of the seven sages of Greece, left as a memorial of his knowledge and benevolence, was, *Be master of thy anger*. He considered anger as the great disturber

of human life, the chief enemy both of public happiness and private tranquillity, and thought that he could not lay on posterity a stronger obligation to reverence his memory than by leaving them a salutary caution against this outrageous passion.

To what latitude Periander might extend the word, the brevity of his precept will scarce allow us to conjecture. From anger, in its full import, protracted into malevolence and exerted in revenge, arise, indeed, many of the evils to which the life of man is exposed. By anger operating upon power are produced the subversion of cities, the desolation of countries, the massacre of nations, and all those dreadful and astonishing calamities which fill the histories of the world, and which could not be read at any distant point of time, when the passions stand neutral, and every motive and principle are left to its natural force, without some doubt of the truth of the relation, did we not see the same causes still tending to the same effects, and only acting with less vigour for want of the same concurrent opportunities.

But this gigantic and enormous species of anger falls not properly under the animadversion of a writer, whose chief end is the regulation of common life, and whose precepts are to recommend themselves by their general use. Nor is this essay intended to expose the tragical or fatal effects even of private malignity. The anger which I propose now for my subject, is such as makes those who indulge in it more troublesome than formidable, and ranks them rather with hornets and wasps than with basilisks and lions. I have therefore prefixed a motto which characterizes this passion, not so much by the mischief that it causes as by the noise that it utters.

There is in the world a certain class of mortals, known, and contentedly known, by the appellation of *passionate men*, who imagine themselves entitled

by that distinction to be provoked on every slight occasion, and to vent their rage in vehement and fierce vociferations, in furious menaces and licentious reproaches. Their rage, indeed, for the most part, fumes away in outcries of injury and protestations of vengeance, and seldom proceeds to actual violence, unless a drawer or linkboy falls in their way ; but they interrupt the quiet of those that happen to be within the reach of their clamours, obstruct the course of conversation, and disturb the enjoyment of society.

Men of this kind are sometimes not without understanding or virtue, and are, therefore, not always treated with the severity which their neglect of the ease of all about them might justly provoke; they have obtained a kind of prescription for their folly, and are considered by their companions as under a predominant influence, that leaves them not masters of their conduct or language, as acting without consciousness, and rushing into mischief with a mist before their eyes; they are therefore pitied rather than censured, and their sallies are passed over as the involuntary blows of a man agitated by the spasms of a convulsion.

It is surely not to be observed without indignation, that men may be found of minds mean enough to be satisfied with this treatment; wretches who are proud to obtain the privilege of madmen, and can, without shame and without regret, consider themselves as receiving hourly pardons from their companions, and giving them continual opportunities of exercising their patience and boasting their clemency.

Pride is undoubtedly the original of anger; but pride, like every other passion, if it once breaks loose from reason, counteracts its own purposes. A passionate man, upon the review of his day, will have very few gratifications to offer to his pride, when he has considered how his outrages were

caused, why they were borne, and in what they are likely to end at last.

Those sudden bursts of rage generally break out upon small occasions; for life, unhappy as it is, cannot supply great evils as frequently as the man of fire thinks it fit to be enraged; therefore, the first reflection upon his violence must show him that he is mean enough to be driven from his post by every petty incident, that he is the mere slave of casualty, and that his reason and virtue are in the power of the wind.

One motive there is of these loud extravagances, which a man is careful to conceal from others, and does not always discover to himself. He that finds his knowledge narrow and his arguments weak, and, by consequence, his suffrage not much regarded, is sometimes in hope of gaining that attention by his clamours which he cannot otherwise obtain, and is pleased with remembering that at least he made himself heard, that he had the power to interrupt those whom he could not confute, and suspend the decision which he could not guide.

Of this kind is the fury to which many men give way among their servants and domestics; they feel their own ignorance, they see their own insignificance; and therefore they endeavour, by their fury, to fright away contempt from before them, when they know it must follow them behind, and think themselves eminently masters when they see one folly tamely complied with, only lest refusal or delay should provoke them to a greater.

These temptations cannot but be owned to have some force. It is so little pleasing to any man to see himself wholly overlooked in the mass of things, that he may be allowed to try a few expedients for procuring some kind of supplemental dignity, and use some endeavour to add weight, by the violence of his temper, to the lightness of his other powers. But this has now been long practised, and found,

upon the most exact estimate, not to produce advantages equal to its inconveniences ; for it appears not that a man can, by uproar, tumult, and bluster, alter any one's opinion of his understanding, or gain influence, except over those whom fortune or nature have made his dependants. He may, by a steady perseverance in his ferocity, fright his children and harass his servants, but the rest of the world will look on and laugh ; and he will have the comfort at last of thinking that he lives only to raise contempt and hatred, emotions to which wisdom and virtue would be always unwilling to give occasion. He has contrived only to make those fear him whom every reasonable being is endeavouring to endear by kindness, and must content himself with the pleasure of a triumph obtained by trampling on them who could not resist. He must perceive that the apprehension which his presence causes is not the awe of his virtue, but the dread of his brutality, and that he has given up the felicity of being loved without gaining the honour of being revered.

But this is not the only ill consequence of the frequent indulgence of this blustering passion, which a man, by often calling to his assistance, will teach in a short time to intrude before the summons, to rush upon him with resistless violence, and without any previous notice of its approach. He will find himself liable to be inflamed at the first touch of provocation, and unable to retain his resentment till he has a full conviction of the offence, to proportion his anger to the cause, or to regulate it by prudence or by duty. When a man has once suffered his mind to be thus vitiated, he becomes one of the most hateful and unhappy beings. He can give no security to himself that he shall not, at the next interview, alienate, by some sudden transport, his dearest friend ; or break out, upon some slight contradiction, into such terms of rudeness as can never be perfectly forgotten. Whoever converses with him,

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lives with the suspicion and solicitude of a man that plays with a tame tiger, always under a necessity of watching the moment in which the capricious savage shall begin to growl.

It is told by Prior, in a panegyric on the Earl of Dorset, that his servants used to put themselves in his way when he was angry, because he was sure to recompense them for any indignities which he made them suffer. This is the round of a passionate man's life; he contracts debts when he is furious, which his virtue, if he has virtue, obliges him to discharge at the return of reason. He spends his time in outrage and acknowledgment, injury and reparation. Or, if there be any who hardens himself in oppression, and justifies the wrong because he has done it, his insensibility can make small part of his praise or his happiness; he only adds deliberate to hasty folly, aggravates petulance by contumacy, and destroys the only plea that he can offer for the tenderness and patience of mankind.

Yet even this degree of depravity we may be content to pity, because it seldom wants a punishment equal to its guilt. Nothing is more despicable or more miserable than the old age of a passionate man. When the vigour of youth fails him, and his amusements pall with frequent repetition, his occasional rage sinks by decay of strength into peevishness; that peevishness, for want of novelty and variety, becomes habitual; the world falls off from around him, and he is left, as Homer expresses it, to devour his own heart in solitude and contempt.

PROMISES OF SECRECY SHOULD BE INVIO-
LABLE.

"And let not wine or anger wrest
Th' intrusted secret from your breast."

HOR.—FRANCIS'S *Trans.*

It is related by Quintus Curtius, that the Persians always conceived an invincible contempt of a man who had violated the laws of secrecy; for they thought that, however he might be deficient in the qualities requisite to actual excellence, the negative virtues at least were in his power; and though he perhaps could not speak well if he was to try, it was still easy for him not to speak.

In forming this opinion of the easiness of secrecy, they seem to have considered it as opposed, not to treachery, but loquacity, and to have conceived the man whom they thus censured, not frightened by menaces to reveal, or bribed by promises to betray, but incited by the mere pleasure of talking, or some other motive equally trifling, to lay open his heart without reflection, and to let whatever he knew slip from him, only for want of power to retain it. Whether, by their settled and avowed scorn of thoughtless talkers, the Persians were able to diffuse to any great extent the virtue of taciturnity, we are hindered by the distance of those times from being able to discover, there being very few memoirs remaining of the court of Persepolis, nor any distinct accounts handed down to us of their office clerks, their ladies of the bedchamber, their attorneys, their chambermaids, or their footmen.

In these latter ages, though the old animosity against a prattler is still retained, it appears wholly to have lost its effect upon the conduct of mankind;

for secrets are so seldom kept, that it may with some reason be doubted whether the ancients were not mistaken in their first posture, whether the quality of retention be so generally bestowed, and whether a secret has not some subtle volatility, by which it escapes imperceptibly at the smallest vent, or some power of fermentation, by which it expands itself so as to burst the heart that will not give it way.

Those that study either the body or the mind of man, very often find the most specious and pleasing theory falling under the weight of contrary experience; and, instead of gratifying their vanity by inferring effects from causes, they are always reduced at last to conjecture causes from effects. That it is easy to be secret, the speculatist can demonstrate in his retreat, and therefore thinks himself justified in placing confidence; the man of the world knows that, whether difficult or not, it is uncommon, and therefore finds himself rather inclined to search after the reason of this universal failure in one of the most important duties of society.

The vanity of being known to be trusted with a secret, is generally one of the chief motives to disclose it; for, however absurd it may be thought to boast an honour by an act which shows that it was conferred without merit, yet most men seem rather inclined to confess the want of virtue than of importance, and more willingly show their influence, though at the expense of their probity, than glide through life with no other pleasure than the private consciousness of fidelity; which, while it is preserved, must be without praise, except from the single person who tries and knows it.

There are many ways of telling a secret, by which a man exempts himself from the reproaches of his conscience, and gratifies his pride without suffering himself to believe that he impairs his virtue. He tells the private affairs of his patron or his friend

only to those from whom he would not conceal his own; he tells them to those who have no temptation to betray the truth, or with a denunciation of a certain forfeiture of his friendship if he discovers that they become public.

Secrets are very frequently told in the first ardour of kindness or love, for the sake of proving, by so important a sacrifice, sincerity or tenderness; but with this motive, though it be strong in itself, vanity concurs, since every man desires to be most esteemed by those whom he loves or with whom he converses, with whom he passes his hours of pleasure, and to whom he retires from business and from care.

When the discovery of secrets is under consideration, there is always a distinction carefully to be made between our own and those of another; those of which we are fully masters, as they affect only our own interest, and those which are reposed with us in trust, and involve the happiness or convenience of such as we have no right to expose to hazard. To tell our own secrets is generally folly, but that folly is without guilt; to communicate those with which we are intrusted is always treachery, and treachery for the most part combined with folly.

There have, indeed, been some enthusiastic and irrational zealots for friendship, who have maintained, and perhaps believed, that one friend has a right to all that is in possession of another; and that, therefore, it is a violation of kindness to exempt any secret from this boundless confidence. Accordingly, a late female minister of state* has been shameless enough to inform the world, that she used, when she wanted to extract anything from her sovereign, to remind her of Montaigne's reasoning, who has determined that to tell a secret to a friend is no

* Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough.—C.

breach of fidelity, because the number of persons trusted is not multiplied, a man and his friend being virtually the same.

That such a fallacy could be imposed upon any human understanding, or that an author could have advanced a position so remote from truth and reason, any other ways than as a declaimer, to show to what extent he could stretch his imagination, and with what strength he could press his principle, would scarcely have been credible, had not this lady kindly shown us how far weakness may be deluded or indolence amused. But since it appears that even this sophistry has been able, with the help of a strong desire, to repose in quiet upon the understanding of another to mislead honest intentions, and an understanding not contemptible,* it may not be superfluous to remark, that those things which are common among friends are only such as either possesses in his own right, and can alienate or destroy without injury to any other person. Without this limitation, confidence must run on without end, the second person may tell the secret to the third upon the same principle as he received it from the first, and a third may hand it forward to the fourth, till at last it is told in the round of friendship to them from whom it was the first intention to conceal it.

The confidence which Caius has of the faithfulness of Titius is nothing more than an opinion which himself cannot know to be true, and which Claudius, who first tells his secret to Caius, may know to be false; and therefore the trust is transferred by Caius, if he reveal what has been told him to one from whom the person originally concerned would have withheld it; and, whatever may be the event, Caius has hazarded the happiness of his friend, without necessity and without permission, and has put

* That of Queen Anne.—C.

that trust in the hand of fortune which was given only to virtue.

All the arguments upon which a man who is telling the private affairs of another may ground his confidence of security, he must, upon reflection, know to be uncertain, because he finds them without effect upon himself. When he is imagining that Titius will be cautious, from a regard to his interest, his reputation, or his duty, he ought to reflect that he is himself at that instant acting in opposition to all these reasons, and revealing what interest, reputation, and duty direct him to conceal.

Every one feels that in his own case he should consider the man incapable of trust who believed himself at liberty to tell whatever he knew to the first whom he should conclude deserving of his own confidence; therefore Caius, in admitting Titius to the affairs imparted only to himself, must know that he violates his faith, since he acts contrary to the intention of Claudius, to whom that faith was given. For promises of friendship are like all others, useless and vain unless they are made in some known sense, adjusted and acknowledged by both parties.

I am not ignorant that many questions may be started relating to the duty of secrecy, where the affairs are of public concern; where subsequent reasons may arise to alter the appearance and nature of the trust; that the manner in which the secret was told may change the degree of obligation; and that the principles upon which a man is chosen for a confidant may not always equally constrain him. But these scruples, if not too intricate, are of too extensive consideration for my present purpose, nor are they such as generally occur in common life; and though casuistical knowledge be useful in proper hands, yet it ought by no means to be carelessly exposed, since most will use it rather to lull than to awaken their own consciences; and the threads of reasoning, on which truth is suspended,

are frequently drawn to such subtilty .hat common eyes cannot perceive and common sensibility cannot feel them.

The whole doctrine, as well as practice of secrecy, is so perplexing and dangerous, that, next to him who is compelled to trust, I think him unhappy who is chosen to be trusted; for he is often involved in scruples without the liberty of calling in the help of any other understanding; he is frequently drawn into guilt under the appearance of friendship and honesty; and sometimes subjected to suspicion by the treachery of others, who are engaged without his knowledge in the same schemes; for he that has one confidant has generally more, and when he is at last betrayed, is in doubt on whom he shall fix the crime.

The rules, therefore, that I shall propose concerning secrecy, and from which I think it not safe to deviate, without long and exact deliberation, are: Never to solicit the knowledge of a secret. Not willingly, nor without many limitations, to accept such confidence when it is offered. When a secret is once admitted, to consider the trust as of a very high nature, important as society, and sacred as truth, and therefore not to be violated for any incidental convenience or slight appearance of contrary fitness.

CONTRARIETY BETWEEN THE LIVES AND WRITINGS OF AUTHORS.

“ Sure such a various creature ne’er was known.”

HOR.—FRANCIS’S *Trans*

AMONG the many inconsistencies which folly produces or infirmity suffers in the human mind, there has often been observed a manifest and striking contrariety between the life of an author and his writings; and Milton, in a letter to a learned stranger, by whom he had been visited, with great reason congratulates himself upon the consciousness of being found equal to his own character, and having preserved in a private and familiar interview that reputation which his works had procured him.

Those whom the appearance of virtue or the evidence of genius have tempted to a nearer knowledge of the writer in whose performances they may be found, have indeed had frequent reason to repent their curiosity: the bubble that sparkled before them has become common water at the touch; the phantom of perfection has vanished when they wished to press it to their bosom. They have lost the pleasure of imagining how far humanity may be exalted, and, perhaps, felt themselves less inclined to toil up the steeps of virtue, when they observe those who seem best able to point the way loitering below, as either afraid of the labour or doubtful of the reward.

It has long been the custom of the Oriental monarchs to hide themselves in gardens and palaces, to avoid the conversation of mankind, and to be known to their subjects only by their edicts. The same policy is no less necessary to him that writes than

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to him that governs ; for men would not more patiently submit to be taught than commanded by one known to have the same follies and weaknesses with themselves. A sudden intruder into the closet of an author would perhaps feel equal indignation with the officer who, having long solicited admission into the presence of Sardanapalus, saw him not consulting upon laws, inquiring into grievances, or modelling armies, but employed in feminine amusements, and directing the ladies in their work.

It is not difficult to conceive, however, that for many reasons a man writes much better than he lives. For, without entering into refined speculations, it may be shown much easier to design than to perform. A man proposes his schemes of life in a state of abstraction and disengagement, exempt from the enticements of hope, the solicitations of affection, the importunities of appetite, or the depressions of fear, and is in the same state with him that teaches upon land the art of navigation, to whom the sea is always smooth and the wind always prosperous.

The mathematicians are well acquainted with the difference between pure science, which has to do only with ideas, and the application of its laws to the use of life, in which they are constrained to submit to the imperfection of matter and the influence of accidents. Thus, in moral discussions, it is to be remembered that many impediments obstruct our practice which very easily give way to theory. The speculatist is only in danger of erroneous reasoning ; but the man involved in life has his own passions and those of others to encounter, and is embarrassed with a thousand inconveniences, which confound him with variety of impulse, and either perplex or obstruct his way. He is forced to act without deliberation, and is obliged to choose before he can examine ; he is surprised by sudden alterations of the state of things, and changes his

measures according to superficial appearances; he is led by others, either because he is indolent or because he is timorous; he is sometimes afraid to know what is right, and sometimes finds friends or enemies diligent to deceive him.

We are therefore not to wonder that most fail, amid tumult, and snares, and danger, in the observance of those precepts which they lay down in solitude, safety, and tranquillity, with a mind unbiased and with liberty unobstructed. It is the condition of our present state to see more than we can attain; the exactest vigilance and caution can never maintain a single day of unmingled innocence, much less can the utmost efforts of incorporated mind reach the summits of speculative virtue.

It is, however, necessary for the idea of perfection to be proposed, that we may have some object to which our endeavours are to be directed; and he that is the most deficient in the duties of his life, makes some atonement for his faults if he warns others against his own failings, and hinders, by the salubrity of his admonitions, the contagion of his example.

Nothing is more unjust, however common, than to charge with hypocrisy him that expresses zeal for those virtues which he neglects to practise; since he may be sincerely convinced of the advantages of conquering his passions without having yet obtained the victory, as a man may be confident of the advantages of a voyage or a journey without having courage or industry to undertake it, and may honestly recommend to others those attempts which he neglects himself.

The interest which the corrupt part of mankind have in hardening themselves against every motive to amendment, has disposed them to give to these contradictions, when they can be produced against the cause of virtue, that weight which they will not allow them in any other case. They see men act

in opposition to their interest, without supposing that they do not know it; those who give way to the sudden violence of passion, and forsake the most important pursuits for petty pleasures, are not supposed to have changed their opinions or to approve their own conduct. In moral and religious questions alone, they determine the sentiments by the actions, and charge every man with endeavouring to impose upon the world whose writings are not confirmed by his life. They never consider that themselves neglect or practise something every day inconsistently with their own settled judgment, nor discover that the conduct of the advocates for virtue can little increase or lessen the obligations of their dictates; argument is to be invalidated only by argument, and is in itself of the same force, whether or not it convinces him by whom it is proposed.

Yet, since this prejudice, however unreasonable, is always likely to have some prevalence, it is the duty of every man to take care lest he should hinder the efficacy of his own instructions. When he desires to gain the belief of others, he should show that he believes himself; and when he teaches the fitness of virtue by his reasonings, he should, by his example, prove its possibility. Thus much, at least, may be required of him, that he shall not act worse than others because he writes better; nor imagine that, by the merit of his genius, he may claim indulgence beyond mortals of the lower classes, and be excused for want of prudence or neglect of virtue.

Bacon, in his history of the winds, after having offered something to the imagination as desirable, often proposes lower advantages in its place to the reason as attainable. The same method may be sometimes pursued in moral endeavours which this philosopher has observed in natural inquiries; having first set positive and absolute excellence before us, we may be pardoned though we sink down to

humbler virtue, trying, however, to keep our point always in view, and struggling not to lose ground though we cannot gain it.

It is recorded of Sir Matthew Hale, that he for a long time concealed the consecration of himself to the stricter duties of religion, lest, by some flagitious and shameful actions, he should bring piety into disgrace. For the same reason, it may be prudent for a writer, who apprehends that he shall not enforce his own maxims by his domestic character, to conceal his name that he may not injure them.

There are, indeed, a great number whose curiosity to gain a more familiar knowledge of successful writers is not so much prompted by an opinion of their power to improve as to delight, and who expect from them not arguments against vice, or dissertations on temperance or justice, but flights of wit and sallies of pleasantry, or, at least, acute remarks, nice distinctions, justness of sentiment, and elegance of diction.

This expectation is, indeed, specious and probable, and yet, such is the fate of all human hopes, that it is very often frustrated, and those who raise admiration by their books disgust by their company. A man of letters, for the most part, spends in the privacies of study that season of life in which the manners are to be softened into ease and polished into elegance; and, when he has gained knowledge enough to be respected, has neglected the minuter acts by which he might have pleased. When he enters life, if his temper be soft and timorous, he is diffident and bashful, from the knowledge of his defects: or if he was born with spirit and resolution, he is ferocious and arrogant, from the consciousness of his merit; he is either dissipated by the awe of company, and unable to recollect his reading and arrange his arguments, or he is hot and dogmatical, quick in opposition, and te-

nacious in defence, disabled by his own violence and confused by his haste to triumph.

The graces of writing and conversation are of different kinds; and though he who excels in one might have been, with opportunities and application, equally successful in the other, yet, as many please by extemporary talk, though utterly unacquainted with the more accurate method and more laboured beauties which composition requires, so it is very possible that men wholly accustomed to works of study may be without that readiness of conception and affluence of language always necessary to colloquial entertainment. They may want address to watch the hints which conversation offers for the display of their particular attainments, or they may be so much unfurnished with matter on common subjects, that discourse not professedly literary glides over them as heterogeneous bodies, without admitting their conceptions to mix in the circulation.

A transition from an author's book to his conversation is too often like an entrance into a large city after a distant prospect. Remotely, we see nothing but spires of temples and turrets of palaces, and imagine it the residence of splendour, grandeur, and magnificence; but, when we have passed the gates, we find it perplexed with narrow passages, disgraced with despicable cottages, embarrassed with obstructions, and clouded with smoke.

THE CONSIDERATION OF THE BREVITY OF LIFE SHOULD MODERATE OUR PASIONS.

“ Let those weak minds who live in doubt and fear,
To juggling priests for oracles repair;
One certain hour of death to each decreed,
My fix'd, my certain soul from doubt has freed.”

LUCAN.—*Rowe's Trans.*

It is recorded of some Eastern monarch, that he kept an officer in his house whose employment it was to remind him of his mortality, by calling out every morning at a stated hour, *Remember, prince, that thou shalt die!* And the contemplation of the frailness and uncertainty of our present state appeared of so much importance to Solon of Athens, that he left this precept to future ages: *Keep thine eye fixed upon the end of life.*

A frequent and attentive prospect of that moment which must put a period to all our schemes and deprive us of all our acquisitions, is indeed of the utmost efficacy to the just and rational regulation of our lives; nor would ever anything wicked, or often anything absurd, be undertaken or prosecuted by him who should begin every day with a serious reflection that he is born to die.

The disturbers of our happiness in this world are our desires, our griefs, and our fears; and to all these, the consideration of mortality is a certain and adequate remedy. Think, says Epictetus, frequently on poverty, banishment, and death, and thou wilt then never indulge violent desires or give up thy heart to mean sentiments.

That the maxim of Epictetus is founded on just observation, will easily be granted when we reflect how that vehemence of eagerness after the common

objects of pursuit is kindled in our minds. We represent to ourselves the pleasures of some future possession, and suffer our thoughts to dwell attentively upon it, till it has wholly engrossed the imagination, and permits us not to conceive any happiness but its attainment, or any misery but its loss, every other satisfaction which the bounty of Providence has scattered over life, is neglected as inconsiderable in comparison of the great object which we have placed before us, and is thrown from us as encumbering our activity, or trampled under foot as standing in our way.

Every man has experienced how much of this ardour has been remitted when a sharp or tedious sickness has set death before his eyes. The extensive influence of greatness, the glitter of wealth, the praises of admirers, and the attendance of supplicants, have appeared vain and empty things when the last hour seemed to be approaching; and the same appearance they would always have if the same thought was always predominant. We should then find the absurdity of stretching out our arms incessantly to grasp that which we cannot keep, and wearing out our lives in endeavours to add new turrets to the fabric of ambition, when the foundation itself is shaking, and the ground on which it stands is mouldering away.

All envy is proportionate to desire; we are uneasy at the attainments of another, according as we think our own happiness would be advanced by the addition of that which he withholds from us; and therefore, whatever depresses immoderate wishes, will, at the same time, set the heart free from the corrosion of envy, and exempt us from that vice which is, above most others, tormenting to ourselves, hateful to the world, and productive of mean artifices and sordid projects. He that considers how soon he must close his life, will find nothing of so much importance as to close it well; and will,

therefore, look with indifference upon whatever is useless to that purpose. Whoever reflects frequently upon the uncertainty of his own duration, will find out that the state of others is not more permanent, and that what can confer nothing on himself very desirable, cannot so much improve the condition of a rival as to make him much superior to those from whom he has carried the prize ; a prize too mean to deserve a very obstinate opposition.

Even grief, that passion to which the virtuous and tender mind is particularly subject, will be obviated or alleviated by the same thoughts. It will be obviated if all the blessings of our condition are enjoyed with a constant sense of this uncertain tenure. If we remember that whatever we possess is to be in our hands but a very little time, and that the little which our lively hopes can promise us may be made less by ten thousand accidents, we shall not much repine at a loss of which we cannot estimate the value, but of which, though we are not able to tell the least amount, we know with sufficient certainty the greatest, and are convinced that the greatest is not much to be regretted.

But if any passion has so much usurped our understanding as not to suffer us to enjoy advantages with the moderation prescribed by reason, it is not too late to apply this remedy when we find ourselves sinking under sorrow, and inclined to pine for that which is irrecoverably vanished. We may then usefully revolve the uncertainty of our own condition; and the folly of lamenting that from which, if it had stayed a little longer, we should ourselves have been taken away.

With regard to the sharpest and most melting sorrow, that which arises from the loss of those whom we have loved with tenderness, it may be observed, that friendship between mortals can be contracted on no other terms than that one must some time mourn for the other's death ; and this grief will al-

ways yield to the survivor one consolation proportionate to his affliction ; for the pain, whatever it be, that he himself feels, his friend has escaped.

Nor is fear, the most overbearing and resistless of all our passions, less to be tempered by this universal medicine of the mind. The frequent contemplation of death, as it shows the vanity of all human good, discovers likewise the lightness of all terrestrial evil, which certainly can last no longer than the subject upon which it acts ; and, according to the old observation, must be shorter as it is more violent. The most cruel calamity which misfortune can produce, must, by the necessity of nature, be quickly at an end. The soul cannot long be held in prison, but will fly away, and leave a lifeless body to human malice :

“ And soaring mocks the broken frame below.”

The utmost that we can threaten to one another is that death, which, indeed, we may precipitate, but cannot retard, and from which, therefore, it cannot become a wise man to buy a reprieve at the expense of virtue, since he knows not how small a portion of time he can purchase, but knows that, whether short or long, it will be made less valuable by the remembrance of the price at which it has been obtained. He is sure that he destroys his happiness, but is not sure that he lengthens his life.

The known shortness of life, as it ought to moderate our passions, may likewise, with equal propriety, contract our designs. There is not time for the most forcible genius and most active industry to extend its effects beyond a certain sphere. To project the conquest of the world is the madness of mighty princes ; to hope for excellence in every science has been the folly of literary heroes ; and both have found, at last, that they have panted for a height of eminence denied to humanity, and have lost many opportunities of making themselves useful and hap-

py by a vain ambition of obtaining a species of honour which the eternal laws of Providence have placed beyond the reach of man.

The miscarriages of the great designs of princes are recorded in the histories of the world, but are of little use to the bulk of mankind, who seem very little interested in admonitions against errors which they cannot commit. But the fate of learned ambition is a proper subject for every scholar to consider; for who has not had occasion to regret the dissipation of great abilities in a boundless multiplicity of pursuits, to lament the sudden desertion of excellent designs upon the offer of some other subject made inviting by its novelty, and to observe the inaccuracy and deficiencies of works left unfinished by too great an extension of the plan?

It is always pleasing to observe how much more our minds can conceive than our bodies can perform! yet it is our duty, while we continue in this complicated state, to regulate one part of our composition by some regard to the other. We are not to indulge our corporeal appetites with pleasures that impair our intellectual vigour, nor gratify our minds with schemes which we know our lives must fail in attempting to execute. The uncertainty of our duration ought at once to set bounds to our designs and add incitements to our industry; and when we find ourselves inclined either to immensity in our schemes or sluggishness in our endeavours, we may either check or animate ourselves by recollecting, with the father of physic, *that art is long and life is short.*

ODIOUSNESS AND FOLLY OF AFFECTION.

"Such pageantry be to the people shown;
There boast thy horse's trappings and thy own,
I know thee to thy bottom, from within
Thy shallow centre, to thy utmost skin."

PENEUS.—DRYDEN'S *Trans.*

AMONG the numerous stratagems by which pride endeavours to recommend folly to regard, there is scarcely one that meets with less success than affectation, or a perpetual disguise of the real character by fictitious appearances; whether it be that every man hates falsehood, from the natural congruity of truths to his faculties of reason, or that every man is jealous of the honour of his understanding, and thinks his discernment consequently called in question whenever anything is exhibited under a borrowed form.

This aversion to all kinds of disguise, whatever be its cause, is universally diffused and incessantly in action; nor is it necessary that, to exasperate detestation or excite contempt, any interest should be invaded, any competition attempted; it is sufficient that there is an intention to deceive, an intention which every heart swells to oppose, and every tongue is busy to detect.

The hatred which dissimulation always draws upon itself is so great, that if I did not know how much cunning differs from wisdom, I should wonder that any men have so little knowledge of their own interest as to aspire to wear a mask for life; to try to impose upon the world a character to which they feel themselves void of any just claim; and to hazard their quiet, their fame, and even their

profit, by exposing themselves to the danger of that reproach, malevolence, and neglect which such a discovery as they have always to fear will certainly bring upon them.

It might be imagined that the pleasure of reputation should consist in the satisfaction of having our opinion of our own merit confirmed by the suffrage of the public; and that to be extolled for a quality which a man knows himself to want, should give him no other happiness than to be mistaken for the owner of an estate over which he chances to be travelling. But he who subsists upon affectation knows nothing of this delicacy; like a desperate adventurer in commerce, he takes up reputation upon trust, mortgages possessions which he never had, and enjoys, to the fatal hour of bankruptcy, though with a thousand terrors and anxieties, the unnecessary splendour of borrowed riches.

Affectation is always to be distinguished from hypocrisy, as being the art of counterfeiting those qualities which we might, with innocence and safety, be known to want. Thus the man who, to carry on any fraud or to conceal any crime, pretends to rigours of devotion and exactness of life, is guilty of hypocrisy; and his guilt is greater, as the end for which he puts on the false appearance is more pernicious. But he that, with an awkward address and unpleasing countenance, boasts of the conquests made by him among the ladies, and counts over the thousands which he might have possessed if he would have submitted to the yoke of matrimony, is chargeable only with affectation. Hypocrisy is the necessary burden of villany, affectation part of the chosen trappings of folly; the one completes a villain, the other only finishes a fop. Contempt is the proper punishment of affectation, and detestation the just consequence of hypocrisy.

With the hypocrite it is not at present my intention to expostulate, though even he might be taught

the excellence of virtue by the necessity of seeming to be virtuous; but the man of affectation may, perhaps, be reclaimed, by finding how little he is likely to gain by perpetual constraint and incessant vigilance, and how much more securely he might make his way to esteem by cultivating real, than displaying counterfeit qualities.

Everything future is to be estimated by a wise man in proportion to the probability of attaining it, and its value when attained; and neither of these considerations will much contribute to the encouragement of affectation. For, if the pinnacles of fame be at best slippery, how unsteady must his footing be who stands upon pinnacles without foundation! If praise be made, by the inconstancy and maliciousness of those who must confer it, a blessing which no man can promise himself from the most conspicuous merit and vigorous industry, how faint must be the hope of gaining it, when the uncertainty is multiplied by the weakness of the pretensions! He that pursues fame with just claims, trusts his happiness to the winds; but he that endeavours after it by false merit, has to fear not only the violence of the storm, but the leaks of his vessel. Though he should happen to keep above water for a time, by the help of a soft breeze and a calm sea, at the first gust he must inevitably founder, with this melancholy reflection, that, if he would have been content with his natural station, he might have escaped his calamity. Affectation may possibly succeed for a time, and a man may, by great attention, persuade others that he really has the qualities of which he presumes to boast; but the hour will come when he should exert them, and then, whatever he enjoyed in praise, he must suffer in reproach.

Applause and admiration are by no means to be counted among the necessities of life, and therefore any indirect arts to obtain them have very little

claim to pardon or compassion. There is scarcely any man without some valuable or improvable qualities, by which he might always secure himself from contempt. And perhaps exemption from ignominy is the most eligible reputation, as freedom from pain is, among some philosophers, the definition of happiness.

If we therefore compare the value of the praise obtained by fictitious excellence, even while the cheat is yet undiscovered, with that kindness which every man may suit by his virtue, and that esteem to which most men may rise by common understanding steadily and honestly applied, we shall find that when from the adscititious happiness all the deductions are made by fear and casualty, there will remain nothing equiponderant to the security of truth. The state of the possessor of humble virtues to the affecter of great excellences, is that of a small cottage of stone to the palace raised with ice by the Empress of Russia; it was for a time splendid and luminous, but the first sunshine melted it to nothing.

WIT AND LEARNING; AN ALLEGORY.

“ Without a genius learning soars in vain ;
 And without learning genius sinks again ;
 Their force united crowns the sprightly reign.”
 HOR.—ELPHINSTON'S *Trans.*

WIT and Learning were the children of Apollo by different mothers: Wit was the offspring of Euphrosyne, and resembled her in cheerfulness and vivacity: Learning was born of Sophia, and retained her seriousness and caution. As their mothers were rivals, they were bred up by them from their birth

in habitual opposition; and all means were so incessantly employed to impress upon them a hatred and contempt of each other, that though Apollo, who foresaw the ill effects of their discord, endeavoured to soften them by dividing his regard equally between them, yet his impartiality and kindness were without effect; the material animosity was deeply rooted, having been intermingled with their first ideas, and was confirmed every hour, as fresh opportunities occurred of exerting it. No sooner were they of age to be received into the apartments of the other celestials, than Wit began to entertain Venus at her toilet by aping the solemnity of Learning, and Learning to divert Minerva at her loom by exposing the blunders and ignorance of Wit.

Thus they grew up, with malice perpetually increasing by the encouragement which each received from those whom their mothers had persuaded to patronise and support them; and longed to be admitted to the table of Jupiter, not so much for the hope of gaining honour as of excluding a rival from all pretensions to regard, and of putting an everlasting stop to the progress of that influence which either believed the other to have obtained by mean arts and false appearances.

At last the day came when they were both, with the usual solemnities, received into the class of superior deities, and allowed to take nectar from the hand of Hebe. But from that hour Concord lost her authority at the table of Jupiter. The rivals, animated by their new dignity and incited by the alternate applauses of the associate powers, harassed each other by incessant contests with such a regular vicissitude of victory that neither was depressed.

It was observable that, at the beginning of every debate, the advantage was on the side of Wit; and that, at the first sallies, the whole assembly sparkled, according to Homer's expression, with unextinguish-

able merriment. But Learning would reserve her strength till the burst of applause was over, and the languor with which the violence of joy is always succeeded, began to promise more calm and patient attention. She then attempted her defence, and by comparing one part of her antagonist's objections with another, commonly made him confute himself; or, by showing how small a part of the question he had taken into his view, proved that his opinion could have no weight. The audience began gradually to lay aside their prepossessions, and rose, at last, with greater veneration for Learning, but with greater kindness for Wit.

Their conduct was, whenever they desired to recommend themselves to distinction, entirely opposite. Wit was daring and adventurous; Learning cautious and deliberate. Wit thought nothing reproachful but dulness; Learning was afraid of no imputation but that of error. Wit answered before he understood, lest his quickness of apprehension should be questioned: Learning paused where there was no difficulty, lest any insidious sophism should lie undiscovered. Wit perplexed every debate by rapidity and confusion; Learning tried the hearers with endless distinctions, and prolonged the dispute without advantage, by proving that which never was denied. Wit, in hopes of shining, would venture to produce what he had not considered, and often succeeded beyond his own expectation by following the train of a lucky thought; Learning would reject every new notion, for fear of being entangled in consequences which she could not foresee, and was often hindered by her caution from pressing her advantages and subduing her opponent.

Both had prejudices which in some degree hindered their progress towards perfection, and left them open to attacks. Novelty was the darling of Wit, and antiquity of Learning. To Wit, all that was new was specious; to Learning, whatever

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was ancient was venerable. Wit, however, seldom failed to divert those whom he could not convince, and to convince was not often his ambition; Learning always supported her opinion with so many collateral truths, that, when the cause was decided against her, her arguments were remembered with admiration.

Nothing was more common on either side than to quit their proper characters, and to hope for a complete conquest by the use of the weapons which had been employed against them. Wit would sometimes labour a syllogism, and Learning distort her features with a jest; but they always suffered by the experiment, and betrayed themselves to confutation or contempt. The seriousness of Wit was without dignity, and the merriment of Learning without vivacity.

Their contests, by long continuance, grew at last important, and the divinities broke into parties. Wit was taken into the protection of the laughter-loving Venus, had a retinue allowed him of Smiles and Jests, and was often permitted to dance among the Graces. Learning still continued the favourite of Minerva, and seldom went out of her palace without a train of the severer virtues, Chastity, Temperance, Fortitude, and Labour. Wit, familiar with Malice, had a son named Satyr, who followed him, carrying a quiver filled with poisoned arrows, which, where they once drew blood, could by no skill ever be extracted. These arrows he frequently shot at Learning, when she was most earnestly or usefully employed, engaged in abstruse inquiries, or giving instructions to her followers. Minerva therefore deputed Criticism to her aid, who generally broke the point of Satyr's arrows, turned them aside, or retorted them on himself.

Jupiter was at last angry that the peace of the heavenly regions should be in perpetual danger of violation, and resolved to dismiss these troublesome

antagonists to the lower world. Hither therefore they came, and carried on their ancient quarrel among mortals, nor was either long without zealous votaries. Wit, by his gayety, captivated the young; and Learning, by her authority, influenced the old. Their power quickly appeared by very eminent effects; theatres were built for the reception of Wit; and colleges endowed for the residence of Learning. Each party endeavoured to outvie the other in cost and magnificence, and to propagate an opinion that it was necessary, from the first entrance into life, to enlist in one of the factions; and that none could hope for the regard of either divinity who had once entered the temple of the rival power.

There were, indeed, a class of mortals by whom Wit and Learning were equally disregarded; these were the devotees of Plutus, the god of riches: among these it seldom happened that the gayety of Wit could raise a smile, or the eloquence of Learning procure attention. In revenge of this contempt, they agreed to incite their followers against them; but the forces that were sent on those expeditions frequently betrayed their trust; and, in contempt of the orders which they had received, flattered the rich in public while they scorned them in their hearts; and when, by this treachery, they had obtained the favour of Plutus, affected to look with an air of superiority on those who still remained in the service of Wit and Learning.

Disgusted with these desertions, the two rivals at the same time petitioned Jupiter for readmission to their native habitations. Jupiter thundered on the right hand, and they prepared to obey the happy summons. Wit readily spread his wings and soared aloft, but, not being able to see far, was bewildered in the pathless immensity of the ethereal spaces. Learning, who knew the way, shook her pinions; but, for want of natural vigour, could only

take short flights; so, after many efforts, they both sunk again to the ground, and learned from their mutual distress the necessity of union. They therefore joined their hands and renewed their flight; Learning was borne up by the vigour of Wit, and Wit guided by the perspicacity of Learning. They soon reached the dwellings of Jupiter, and were so endeared to each other that they lived afterward in perpetual concord. Wit persuaded Learning to converse with the Graces, and Learning engaged Wit in the service of the Virtues. They were now the favourites of all the powers of heaven, and gladdened every banquet by their presence. They soon after married, at the command of Jupiter, and had a numerous progeny of Arts and Sciences.

PRESUMPTION AND DESPONDENCY

“For they can conquer who believe they can.”

VIRG.—DRYDEN'S *Trins.*

THERE are some vices and errors, which, though often fatal to those in whom they are found, have yet, by the universal consent of mankind, been considered as entitled to some degree of respect, or have at least been exempted from contemptuous infamy, and condemned by the severest moralists with pity rather than detestation.

A constant and invariable example of this general partiality will be found in the different regard which has always been shown to rashness and cowardice; two vices, of which, though they may be conceived equally distant from the middle point where true fortitude is placed, and may equally injure any pub-

lic or private interest, yet the one is never mentioned without some kind of veneration, and the other always considered as a topic of unlimited and licentious censure, on which all the virulence of reproach may be lawfully exerted.

The same distinction is made by the common suffrage between profusion and avarice, and perhaps between many other opposite vices; and as I have found reason to pay great regard to the voice of the people, in cases where knowledge has been forced upon them by experience, without long deductions or deep researches, I am inclined to believe that this distribution of respect is not without some agreement with the nature of things; and that in the faults which are thus invested with extraordinary privileges, there are generally some latent principles of merit, some possibilities of future virtue, which may, by degrees, break from obstruction, and by time and opportunity be brought into act.

It may be laid down as an axiom, that it is more easy to take away superfluities than to supply defects; and therefore he that is culpable, because he has passed the middle point of virtue, is always accounted a fairer object of hope than he who fails by falling short. The one has all that perfection requires, and more, but the excess may be easily retrenched; the other wants the qualities requisite to excellence, and who can tell how he shall obtain them? We are certain that the horse may be taught to keep pace with his fellows; whose fault is it that he leaves them behind? We know that a few strokes of the axe will lop a cedar; but what arts of cultivation can elevate a shrub?

To walk with circumspection and steadiness in the right path, at an equal distance between the extremes of error, ought to be the constant endeavour of every reasonable being; nor can I think those teachers of moral wisdom much to be honoured as benefactors to mankind, who are always enlarging

upon the difficulty of our duties, and providing rather excuses for vice than incentives to virtue.

But since to most it will happen often, and to all sometimes, that there will be a deviation towards one side or the other, we ought always to employ our vigilance with most attention on that enemy from which there is the greatest danger, and to stray, if we must stray, towards those parts from whence we may quickly and easily return.

Among other opposite qualities of the mind which may become dangerous, though in different degrees, I have often had occasion to consider the contrary effects of presumption and despondency; of heady confidence, which promises victory without contest, and heartless pusillanimity, which shrinks back from the thought of great undertakings, and confounds difficulty with impossibility, and considers all advancement towards any new attainment as irreversibly prohibited.

Presumption will be easily corrected. Every experiment will teach caution, and miscarriages will hourly show that attempts are not always rewarded with success. The most precipitate ardour will in time be taught the necessity of methodical gradation and preparatory measures; and the most daring confidence be convinced that neither merit nor abilities can command events.

It is the advantage of vehemence and activity that they are always hastening to their own reformation; because they incite us to try whether our expectations are well grounded, and therefore detect the deceits which they are apt to occasion. But timidity is a disease of the mind more obstinate and fatal; for a man, once persuaded that any impediment is insuperable, has given it, with respect to himself, that strength and weight which it had not before. He can scarcely strive with vigour and perseverance when he has no hope of gaining the victory; and since he never will try his strength,

can never discover the unreasonableness of his fears.

There is often to be found in men devoted to literature a kind of intellectual cowardice, which, whoever converses much among them, may observe frequently to depress the alacrity of enterprise, and, by consequence, to retard the improvement of science. They have annexed to every species of knowledge some chimerical character of terror and inhibition, which they transmit, without much reflection, from one to another; they first fright themselves, and then propagate the panic to their scholars and acquaintance. One study is inconsistent with a lively imagination, another with a solid judgment; one is improper in the early part of life, another requires so much time that it is not to be attempted at an advanced age; one is dry and contracts the sentiments, another is diffuse and overburdens the memory; one is insufferable to taste and delicacy, and another wears out life in the study of words, and is useless to a wise man, who desires only the knowledge of things.

But of all the bugbears of which the *infantes barbati*, boys both young and old, have been hitherto frightened from digressing into new tracts of learning, none has been more mischievously efficacious than an opinion that every kind of knowledge requires a peculiar genius, or mental constitution framed for the reception of some ideas and the exclusion of others: and that to him whose genius is not adapted to the study which he prosecutes, all labour shall be vain and fruitless; vain as an endeavour to mingle oil and water, or, in the language of chymistry, to amalgamate bodies of heterogeneous principles.

This opinion we may reasonably suspect to have been propagated by vanity beyond the truth. It is natural for those who have raised a reputation by any science to exalt themselves as endowed by Heaven with peculiar powers, or marked out by an

extraordinary designation for their profession; and to fright competitors away by representing the difficulties with which they must contend, and the necessity of qualities which are supposed to be not generally conferred, and which no man can know but by experience whether he enjoys.

To this discouragement it may be possibly answered, that since a genius, whatever it be, is like fire in a flint, only to be produced by collision with a proper subject, it is the business of every man to try whether his faculties may not happily co-operate with his desires; and since they whose proficiency he admires knew their own force only by the event, he needs but engage in the same undertaking with equal spirit, and may reasonably hope for equal success.

There is another species of false intelligence, given by those who profess to show the way to the summit of knowledge, of equal tendency to depress the mind with false distrust of itself, and weaken it by needless solicitude and dejection. When a scholar whom they desire to animate consults them at his entrance on some new study, it is common to make flattering representations of its pleasantness and facility. Thus they generally attain one of two ends almost equally desirable; they either incite his industry by elevating his hopes, or produce a high opinion of their own abilities, since they are supposed to relate only what they have found, and to have proceeded with no less ease than they promise to their followers.

The student, inflamed by this encouragement, sets forward in the new path, and proceeds a few steps with great alacrity; but he soon finds asperities and intricacies of which he has not been forewarned, and, imagining that none ever were so entangled or fatigued before him, sinks suddenly into despair, and desists as from an expedition in which fate opposes him. Thus his terrors are multiplied

by his hopes, and he is defeated without resistance, because he had no expectation of an enemy.

Of these treacherous instructors, the one destroys industry by declaring that industry is vain, the other by representing it as needless; the one cuts away the root of hope, the other raises it only to be blasted; the one confines his pupil to the shore, by telling him that his wreck is certain, the other sends him to sea without preparing him for tempests.

False hopes and false terrors are equally to be avoided. Every man who proposes to grow eminent by learning should carry in his mind at once the difficulty of excellence and the force of industry; and remember that fame is not conferred but as the recompense of labour, and that labour vigorously continued has not often failed of its reward.

IMPORTANCE OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE.

“To him, alas! to him, I fear,
The face of death will terrible appear,
Who in his life, flatt’ring his senseless pride,
By being known to all the world beside,
Does not himself, when he is dying, know,
Nor what he is, nor whither he’s to go.

SENECA.—COWLEY’S *Trans.*

I HAVE shown, in a late essay, to what errors men are hourly betrayed by a mistaken opinion of their own powers, and a negligent inspection of their own character. But as I then confined my observations to common occurrences and familiar scenes, I think it proper to inquire how far a nearer acquaintance with ourselves is necessary to our preservation from crimes as well as follies, and how much the attentive study of our own minds may

contribute to secure to us the approbation of that Being, to whom we are accountable for our thoughts and our actions, and whose favour must finally constitute our total happiness.

If it be reasonable to estimate the difficulty of any enterprise by frequent miscarriages, it may justly be concluded that it is not easy for a man to know himself; for, wheresoever we turn our view, we shall find almost all, with whom we converse so nearly as to judge of their sentiments, indulging more favourable conceptions of their own virtue than they have been able to impress upon others, and congratulating themselves upon degrees of excellence which their fondest admirers cannot allow them to have attained.

Those representations of imaginary virtue are generally considered as arts of hypocrisy, and as snares laid for confidence and praise. But I believe the suspicion often unjust; those who thus propagate their own reputation, only extend the fraud by which they have been themselves deceived; for this failing is incident to numbers who seem to live without designs, competitions, or pursuits; it appears on occasions which promise no accession of honour or of profit, and to persons from whom very little is to be hoped or feared. It is, indeed, not easy to tell how far we may be blinded by the love of ourselves, when we reflect how much a secondary passion can cloud our judgment, and how few faults a man in the first raptures of love can discover in the person or conduct of his mistress.

To lay open all the sources from which error flows in upon him who contemplates his own character, would require more exact knowledge of the human heart than perhaps the most acute and laborious observers have acquired. And since falsehood may be diversified without end, it is not unlikely that every man admits an imposture, in some respect peculiar to himself, as his views have been

accidentally directed or his ideas particularly combined.

Some fallacies, however, there are, more frequently insidious, which it may, perhaps, not be useless to detect; because, though they are gross, they may be fatal, and because nothing but attention is necessary to defeat them.

One sophism by which men persuade themselves that they have those virtues which they really want, is formed by the substitution of single acts for habits. A miser who once relieved a friend from the danger of a prison, suffers his imagination to dwell for ever upon his own heroic generosity; he yields his heart up to indignation at those who are blind to merit or insensible to misery, and who can please themselves with the enjoyment of that wealth which they never permit others to partake. From any censures of the world or reproaches of his conscience, he has an appeal to action and to knowledge: and though his whole life is a course of rapacity and avarice, he concludes himself to be tender and liberal, because he has once performed an act of liberality and tenderness.

As a glass which magnifies objects by the approach of one end to the eye, lessens them by the application of the other, so vices are extenuated by the inversion of that fallacy by which virtues are augmented. Those faults which we cannot conceal from our own notice are considered, however frequent, not as habitual corruptions or settled practices, but as casual failures and single lapses. A man who has from year to year set his country to sale, either for the gratification of his ambition or resentment, confesses that the heat of party now and then betrays the severest virtue to measures that cannot be seriously defended. He that spends his days and nights in riot and debauchery, owns that his passions oftentimes overpower his resolutions. But each comforts himself that his faults

are not without precedent, for the best and the wisest men have given way to the violence of sudden temptations.

There are men who always confound the praise of goodness with the practice, and who believe themselves mild and moderate, charitable and faithful, because they have exerted their eloquence in commendation of mildness, fidelity, and other virtues. This is an error almost universal among those that converse much with dependants, with such whose fear or interest disposes them to a seeming reverence for any declamation, however enthusiastic, and submission to any boast, however arrogant. Having none to recall their attention to their lives, they rate themselves by the goodness of their opinions, and forget how much more easily men may show their virtue in their talk than in their actions.

The tribe is likewise very numerous of those who regulate their lives, not by the standard of religion, but the measure of other men's virtue; who lull their own remorse with the remembrance of crimes more atrocious than their own, and seem to believe they are not bad while another can be found worse.

For escaping these and a thousand other deceits, many expedients have been proposed. Some have recommended the frequent consultation of a wise friend, admitted to intimacy and encouraged to sincerity. But this appears a remedy by no means adapted to general use: for, in order to secure the virtue of one, it presupposes more virtue in two than will generally be found. In the first, such a desire of rectitude and amendment as may incline him to hear his own accusation from the mouth of him whom he esteems, and by whom, therefore, he will always hope that his faults are not discovered; and in the second, such zeal and honesty as will make him content, for his friend's advantage, to lose his kindness.

A long life may be passed without finding a friend in whose understanding and virtue we can equally confide, and whose opinion we can value at once for its justness and sincerity. A weak man, however honest, is not qualified to judge. A man of the world, however penetrating, is not fit to counsel. Friends are often chosen for similitude of manners, and therefore each palliates the other's failings because they are his own. Friends are tender, and unwilling to give pain, or they are interested, and fearful to offend.

These objections have inclined others to advise, that he who would know himself should consult his enemies, remember the reproaches that are vented to his face, and listen for the censures that are uttered in private. For his great business is to know his faults, and those malignity will discover and resentment will reveal. But this precept may be often frustrated; for it seldom happens that rivals or opponents are suffered to come near enough to know our conduct with so much exactness, as that conscience should allow and reflect the accusation. The charge of an enemy is often totally false, and commonly so mingled with falsehood that the mind takes advantage from the failure of one part to discredit the rest, and never suffers any disturbance afterward from such partial reports.

Yet it seems that enemies have been always found by experience the most faithful monitors; for adversity has ever been considered as the state in which a man most easily becomes acquainted with himself, and this effect it must produce by withdrawing flatterers, whose business it is to hide our weakness from us, or by giving loose to malice and license to reproach; or, at least, by cutting off those pleasures which called us away from meditation on our conduct, and repressing that pride which too easily persuades us that we merit whatever we enjoy.

Part of these benefits it is in every man's power to procure himself, by assigning proper portions of his life to the examination of the rest, and by putting himself frequently in such a situation, by retirement and abstraction, as may weaken the influence of external objects. By this practice he may obtain the solitude of adversity without its melancholy, its instructions without its censures, and its sensibility without its perturbations.

The necessity of setting the world at a distance from us, when we are to take a survey of ourselves, has sent many from high stations to the severities of a monastic life; and, indeed, every man deeply engaged in business, if all regard to another state be not extinguished, must have the conviction, though, perhaps, not the resolution, of Valdesso, who, when he solicited Charles the Fifth to dismiss him, being asked whether he retired upon disgust, answered that he laid down his commission for no other reason but because *there ought to be some time for sober reflection between the life of a soldier and his death.*

There are few conditions which do not entangle us with sublunary hopes and fears, from which it is necessary to be at intervals disencumbered, that we may place ourselves in his presence who views effects in their causes and actions in their motives; that we may, as Chillingworth expresses it, consider things as if there were no other beings in the world but God and ourselves: or, to use language yet more awful, *may commune with our own hearts and be still.*

Death, says Seneca, falls heavy upon him who is too much known to others and too little to himself; and Pontanus, a man celebrated among the early restorers of literature, thought the study of our own hearts of so much importance, that he has recommended it from his tomb. "I am Pontanus, beloved by the powers of literature, admired by men of worth, and dignified by the monarchs of the

world. Thou knowest now who I am, or, more properly, who I was. For thee, stranger, I who am in darkness cannot know thee, but I entreat thee to know thyself."

I hope every reader of this paper will consider himself as engaged to the observation of a precept which the wisdom and virtue of all ages have concurred to enforce: a precept dictated by philosophers, inculcated by poets, and ratified by saints.

UNREASONABLENESS OF EXCESSIVE ANXIETY ABOUT THE FUTURE.

"But God has wisely hid from human sight
The dark decrees of future fate,
And sown their seeds in depth of night;
He laughs at all the giddy turns of state,
When mortals search too soon, and fear too late."
HOR.—DRYDEN'S *Trans.*

THERE is nothing recommended with greater frequency among the gayer poets of antiquity than the secure possession of the present hour, and the dismissal of all the cares which intrude upon our quiet, or hinder, by importunate perturbations, the enjoyment of those delights which our condition happens to set before us.

The ancient poets are, indeed, by no means unexceptionable teachers of morality; their precepts are to be always considered as the sallies of a genius, intent rather upon giving pleasure than instruction, eager to take every advantage of insinuation, and, provided the passions can be engaged on its side, very solicitous about the suffrage of reason.

The darkness and uncertainty through which the heathens were compelled to wander in the pursuit

of happiness, may indeed be alleged as an excuse for many of their seducing invitations to immediate enjoyment, which the moderns, by whom they have been imitated, have not to plead. It is no wonder that such as had no promise of another state should eagerly turn their thoughts upon the improvement of that which was before them; but surely those who are acquainted with the hopes and fears of eternity, might think it necessary to put some restraint upon their imaginations, and reflect that by echoing the songs of the ancient bacchanals, and transmitting the maxims of past debauchery, they not only prove that they want invention, but virtue, and submit to the servility of imitation only to copy that of which the writer, if he was to live now, would often be ashamed.

Yet, as the errors and follies of a great genius are seldom without some radiations of understanding, by which meaner minds may be enlightened, the incitements to pleasure are, in those authors, generally mingled with such reflections upon life as well deserve to be considered distinctly from the purposes for which they are produced, and to be treasured up as the settled conclusions of extensive observation, acute sagacity, and mature experience.

It is not without true judgment that on these occasions they often warn their readers against inquiries into futurity, and solicitude about events which lie hid in causes yet inactive, and which time has not brought forward into the view of reason. An idle and thoughtless resignation to chance, without any struggle against calamity or endeavour after advantage, is indeed below the dignity of a reasonable being, in whose power Providence has put a great part even of his present happiness; but it shows an equal ignorance of our proper sphere to harass our thoughts with conjectures about things not yet in being. How can we regulate events, of which we yet know not whether they

will ever happen? And why should we think, with painful anxiety, about that on which our thoughts can have no influence?

It is a maxim commonly received, that a wise man is never surprised; and perhaps this exemption from astonishment may be imagined to proceed from such a prospect into futurity as gave previous intimation of those evils which often fall unexpected upon others that have less foresight. But the truth is, that things to come, except when they approach very nearly, are equally hidden from men of all degrees of understanding; and if a wise man is not amazed at sudden occurrences, it is not that he has thought more, but less, upon futurity. He never considered things not yet existing as the proper objects of his attention; he never indulged dreams till he was deceived by their phantoms, nor ever realized nonentities to his mind. He is not surprised because he is not disappointed, and he escapes disappointment because he never forms any expectations.

The concern about things to come, that is so justly censured, is not the result of those general reflections on the variableness of fortune, the uncertainty of life, and the universal insecurity of all human acquisitions, which must always be suggested by the view of the world; but such a desponding anticipation of misfortune as fixes the mind upon scenes of gloom and melancholy, and makes fear predominate in every imagination.

Anxiety of this kind is nearly of the same nature with jealousy in love and suspicion in the general commerce of life; a temper which keeps the man always in alarms; disposes him to judge of everything in a manner that least favours his own quiet, fills him with perpetual stratagems of counteraction, wears him out in schemes to obviate evils which never threatened him, and at length, perhaps, con-

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tributes to the production of those mischiefs of which it had raised such dreadful apprehensions.

It has been usual in all ages for moralists to repress the swellings of vain hope, by representations of the innumerable casualties to which life is subject, and by instances of the unexpected defeat of the wisest schemes of policy, and sudden subversions of the highest eminences of greatness. It has, perhaps, not been equally observed, that all these examples afford the proper antidote to fear as well as to hope, and may be applied with no less efficacy as consolations to the timorous than as restraints to the proud.

Evil is uncertain in the same degree as good, and for the reason that we ought not to hope too securely, we ought not to fear with too much dejection. The state of the world is continually changing, and none can tell the result of the next vicissitude. Whatever is afloat in the stream of time may, when it is very near us, be driven to cross the general course of the current. The sudden accidents by which the powerful are depressed may fall upon those whose malice we fear; and the greatness by which we expect to be overborne may become another proof of the false flatteries of fortune. Our enemies may become weak, or we may grow strong before our encounter, or we may advance against each other without ever meeting. There are, indeed, natural evils which we can flatter ourselves with no hopes of escaping, and with little of delaying; but of the ills which are apprehended from human malignity, or the opposition of rival interests, we may always alleviate the terror by considering that our persecutors are weak, and ignorant, and mortal like ourselves.

The misfortunes which arise from the concurrence of unhappy incidents should never be suffered to disturb us before they happen; because, if the breast be once laid open to the dread of mere pos-

sibilities of misery, life must be given a prey to dismal solitude, and quiet must be lost for ever.

It is remarked by old Cornaro, that it is absurd to be afraid of the natural dissolution of the body, because it must certainly happen, and can, by no caution or artifice, be avoided. Whether the sentiment be entirely just I shall not examine; but certainly, if it be improper to fear events which must happen, it is yet more evidently contrary to right reason to fear those which may never happen, and which, if they should come upon us, we cannot resist.

As we ought not to give way to fear any more than indulgence to hope, because the objects both of fear and hope are yet uncertain, so we ought not to trust the representations of one more than of the other, because they are both equally fallacious; as hope enlarges happiness, fear aggravates calamity. It is generally allowed, that no man ever found the happiness of possession proportionate to that expectation which incited his desire and invigorated his pursuit; nor has any man found the evils of life so formidable in reality as they were described to him by his own imagination; every species of distress brings with it some peculiar supports, some unforeseen means of resisting, or power of enduring. Taylor justly blames some pious persons who indulge their fancies too much, set themselves, by the force of imagination, in the place of the ancient martyrs and confessors, and question the validity of their own faith, because they shrink at the thoughts of flames and tortures. It is, says he, sufficient that you are able to encounter the temptations which now assault you; when God sends trials he may send strength.

All fear is in itself painful, and when it conduces not to satisfy, is painful without use. Every consideration, therefore, by which groundless terrors may be removed, adds something to human happiness. It is, likewise, not unworthy of remark, that

in proportion as our cares are employed upon the future, they are abstracted from the present, from the only time which we can call our own, and of which, if we neglect the apparent duties to make provision against visionary attacks, we shall certainly counteract our own purpose; for he doubtless mistakes his true interest who thinks that he can increase his safety when he impairs his virtue.

PERTINACITY IN DEFENDING OUR OWN ERRORS.

“Corrupt manners I shall ne’er defend;
Nor, falsely witty, for my faults contend.”

OVID.—ELPHINSTON’S *Trans.*

THOUGH the fallibility of man’s reason and the narrowness of his knowledge are very liberally confessed, yet the conduct of those who so willingly admit the weakness of human nature seems to discern that this acknowledgment is not altogether sincere; at least, that most make it with a tacit reserve in favour of themselves, and that with whatever ease they give up the claim of their neighbours, they are desirous of being thought exempt from faults in their own conduct and from error in their opinions.

The certain and obstinate opposition which we may observe made to confutation however clear, and to reproof however tender, is an undoubted argument that some dormant privilege is thought to be attacked; for as no man can lose what he neither possesses nor imagines himself to possess, or be defrauded of that to which he has no right, it is reasonable to suppose that those who break out into fury at the softest contradiction or the slightest

censure, since they apparently conclude themselves injured, must fancy some ancient immunity violated or some natural prerogative invaded. To be mistaken, if they thought themselves liable to mistake, could not be considered as either shameful or wonderful, and they would not receive with so much emotion intelligence which only informed them of what they knew before, nor struggle with such earnestness against an attack that deprived them of nothing to which they held themselves entitled.

It is related of one of the philosophers, that when an account was brought him of his son's death, he received it only with this reflection, *I knew that my son was mortal*. He that is convinced of an error, if he had the same knowledge of his own weakness, would, instead of straining for artifices and brooding malignity, only regard such oversights as the appendages of humanity, and pacify himself with considering that he had always known man to be a fallible being.

If it be true that most of our passions are excited by the novelty of objects, there is little reason for doubting, that to be considered as subject to fallacies of ratiocination or imperfection of knowledge is to a great part of mankind entirely new; for it is impossible to fall into any company where there is not some regular and established subordination, without finding rage and vehemence produced only by difference of sentiments about things in which neither of the disputants have any other interest than what proceeds from their mutual unwillingness to give way to any opinion that may bring upon them the disgrace of being wrong.

I have heard of one that, having advanced some erroneous doctrines in philosophy, refused to see the experiments by which they were confuted: and the observation of every day will give new proofs with how much industry subterfuges and evasions are sought to decline the pressure of resistless ar-

guments; how often the state of the question is altered; how often the antagonist is wilfully misrepresented; and in how much perplexity the clearest positions are involved by those whom they happen to oppose.

Of all mortals, none seem to have been more infected with this species of vanity than the race of writers whose reputation, arising solely from their understanding, gives them a very delicate sensibility of any violence attempted on their literary honour. It is not displeasing to remark with what solicitude men of acknowledged abilities will endeavour to palliate absurdities and reconcile contradictions, only to obviate criticisms to which all human performances must ever be exposed, and from which they can never suffer but when they teach the world, by a vain and ridiculous impatience, to think them of importance.

Dryden, whose warmth of fancy and haste of composition very frequently hurried him into inaccuracies, heard himself sometimes exposed to ridicule for having said in one of his tragedies,

“I follow fate, which does too fast pursue.”

That no man could at once follow and be followed, was, it may be thought, too plain to be long disputed; and the truth is, that Dryden was apparently betrayed into the blunder by the double meaning of the word fate, to which, in the former part of the verse, he had annexed the idea of Fortune, and in the latter that of Death; so that the sense only was, *Though pursued by Death, I will not resign myself to despair, but will follow Fortune, and do and suffer what is appointed.* This, however, was not completely expressed, and Dryden, being determined not to give way to his critics, never confessed that he had been surprised by an ambiguity; but finding, luckily, in Virgil an account of a man moving in a circle with this expression, *Et se sequiturque fugitque*, “Here,”

says he, "is the passage in imitation of which I wrote the line that my critics were pleased to condemn as nonsense; not but I may sometimes write nonsense, though they have not the fortune to find it."

Every one sees the folly of such mean doublings to escape the pursuit of criticism; nor is there a single reader of this poet who would not have paid him greater veneration had he shown consciousness enough of his own superiority to set such cavils at defiance, and owned that he sometimes slipped into errors by the tumult of his imagination and the multitude of his ideas.

It is happy when this temper discovers itself only in little things, which may be right or wrong without any influence on the virtue or happiness of mankind. We may, with very little inquietude, see a man persist in a project which he has found to be impracticable, live in an inconvenient house because it was contrived by himself, or wear a coat of a particular cut, in hopes by perseverance to bring it into fashion. These are indeed follies, but they are only follies, and, however wild and ridiculous, can very little affect others.

But such pride, once indulged, too frequently operates upon more important objects, and inclines men not only to vindicate their errors, but their vices; to persist in practices which their own hearts condemn, only lest they should seem to feel reproaches, or be made wiser by the advice of others; or to search for sophisms tending to the confusion of all principles and the evacuation of all duties, that they may not appear to act what they are not able to defend.

Let every man who finds vanity so far predominant as to betray him to the danger of this last degree of corruption, pause a moment to consider what will be the consequences of the plea which he is about to offer for a practice to which he knows

himself not led at first by reason, but impelled by the violence of desire, surprised by the suddenness of passion, or seduced by the soft approaches of temptation and by imperceptible gradations of guilt. Let him consider what he is going to commit by forcing his understanding to patronise those appetites which it is its chief business to hinder and reform.

The cause of virtue requires so little art to defend it, and good and evil, when they have been once shown, are so easily distinguished, that such apologists seldom gain proselytes to their party, nor have their fallacies power to deceive any but those whose desires have clouded their discernment. All that the best faculties thus employed can perform is, to persuade the hearers that the man is hopeless whom they only thought vicious; that corruption has passed from his manners to his principles; that all endeavours for his recovery are without prospect of success; and that nothing remains but to avoid him as infectious, or hunt him down as destructive.

But if it be supposed that he may impose on his audience by partial representations of consequences, intricate deductions of remote causes, or perplexed combinations of ideas, which, having various relations, appear different as viewed on different sides; that he may sometimes puzzle the weak and well-meaning, and now and then seduce, by the admiration of his abilities, a young mind still fluctuating in unsettled notions, and neither fortified by instruction nor enlightened by experience; yet what must be the event of such a triumph! A man cannot spend all this life in frolic: age, or disease, or solitude will bring some hours of serious consideration, and it will then afford no comfort to think that he has extended the dominion of vice, that he has loaded himself with the crimes of others, and can never know the extent of his own wickedness, or make

reparation for the mischief that he has caused. There is not, perhaps, in all the stores of ideal anguish, a thought more painful than the consciousness of having propagated corruption by vitiating principles; of having not only drawn others from the paths of virtue, but blocked up the way by which they should return; of having blinded them to every beauty but the paint of pleasure, and deafened them to every call but the alluring voice of the sirens of destruction.

There is yet another danger in this practice: men who cannot deceive others are very often successful in deceiving themselves; they weave their sophistry till their own reason is entangled, and repeat their positions until they are credited by themselves; by often contending they grow sincere in the cause; and by long wishing for demonstrative arguments, they at last bring themselves to fancy that they have found them. They are then at the uttermost verge of wickedness, and may die without having that light rekindled in their minds which their own pride and contumacy have extinguished.

The men who can be charged with fewest failings, either with respect to abilities or virtue, are generally most ready to allow them; for, not to dwell on things of solemn and awful consideration, the humility of confessors, the tears of saints, and the dying terrors of persons eminent for piety and innocence, it is well known that Cæsar wrote an account of the errors committed by him in his wars of Gaul, and that Hippocrates, whose name is, perhaps, in rational estimation, greater than Cæsar's, warned posterity against a mistake into which he had fallen. "So much," says Celsus, "does the open and artless confession of an error become a man conscious that he has enough remaining to support his character."

As all error is meanness, it is incumbent on

every man who consults his own dignity to retract as soon as he discovers it, without fearing any censure so much as that of his own mind. As justice requires that all injuries should be repaired, it is the duty of him who has seduced others by bad practices or false notions to endeavour that such as have adopted his errors should know his retraction, and that those who have learned vice by his example should by his example be taught amendment.

THE DUTY AND BENEFITS OF PATIENCE.

"Of all the woes that load the mortal state,
Whate'er thy portion, wildly meet thy fate;
But ease it as thou canst."

PYTHAG.--ELPHINSTON'S *Trans.*

So large a part of human life passes in a state contrary to our natural desires, that one of the principal topics of moral instruction is the art of bearing calamities. And such is the certainty of evil, that it is the duty of every man to furnish his mind with those principles which may enable him to act under it with decency and propriety.

The sect of ancient philosophers that boasted to have carried this necessary science to the highest perfection were the Stoics, or scholars of Zeno, whose wild, enthusiastic virtue pretended to an exemption from the sensibilities of unenlightened mortals, and who proclaimed themselves exalted, by the doctrines of their sect, above the reach of those miseries which imbitter life to the rest of the world. They therefore removed pain, poverty, loss of friends, exile, and violent death from the catalogue of evils; and passed, in their haughty style,

a kind of irreversible decree, by which they forbade them to be counted any longer among the objects of terror or anxiety, or to give any disturbance to the tranquillity of a wise man.

This edict was, I think, not universally observed : for, though one of the more resolute, when he was tortured by a violent disease, cried out, that, let pain harass him to its utmost power, it should never force him to consider it as other than indifferent and neutral ; yet all had not stubbornness to hold out against their senses ; for a weaker pupil of Zeno is recorded to have confessed, in the anguish of the gout, that *he now found pain to be an evil*.

It may however be questioned, whether these philosophers can be very properly numbered among the teachers of patience ; for if pain be not an evil, there seems no instruction requisite how it may be borne ; and therefore, when they endeavour to arm their followers with arguments against it, they may be thought to have given up their first position. But such inconsistencies are to be expected from the greatest understandings, when they endeavour to grow eminent by singularity, and employ their strength in establishing opinions opposite to nature.

The controversy about the reality of external evils is now at an end. That life has many miseries, and that those miseries are sometimes, at least, equal to all the powers of fortitude, is now universally confessed ; and therefore it is useful to consider not only how we may escape them, but by what means those which either the accidents of affairs or the infirmities of nature must bring upon us, may be mitigated and lightened, and how we may make those hours less wretched which the condition of our present existence will not allow to be very happy.

The cure for the greatest part of human miseries is not radical, but palliative. Infelicity is involved in corporeal nature and interwoven with our being :

all attempts, therefore, to decline it wholly are useless and vain; the armies of pain send their arrows against us on every side; the choice is only between those which are more or less sharp, or tinged with poison of greater or less malignity; and the strongest armour which reason can supply will only blunt their points, but cannot repel them.

The great remedy which Heaven has put in our hands is patience, by which, though we cannot lessen the torments of the body, we can in a great measure preserve the peace of the mind, and shall suffer only the natural and genuine force of an evil, without heightening its acrimony or prolonging its effects.

There is, indeed, nothing more unsuitable to the nature of man in any calamity than rage and turbulence, which, without examining whether they are not sometimes impious, are at least always offensive, and incline others rather to hate and despise than to pity and assist us. If what we suffer has been brought upon us by ourselves, it is observed by an ancient poet that patience is eminently our duty, since no one should be angry at feeling that which he has deserved.

“Let pain deserved without complaint be borne.”

And surely, if we are conscious that we have not contributed to our own sufferings, if punishment falls upon innocence, or disappointment happens to industry and prudence, patience, whether more necessary or not, is much easier, since our pain is then without aggravation, and we have not the bitterness of remorse to add to the asperity of misfortune.

In those evils which are allotted to us by Providence, such as deformity, privation of any of the senses, or old age, it is always to be remembered that impatience can have no present effect but to deprive us of the consolations which our condition

admits, by driving away from us those by whose conversation or advice we might be amused or helped; and that with regard to futurity it is yet less to be justified, since, without lessening the pain, it cuts off the hope of that reward which He by whom it is inflicted will confer upon them that bear it well.

In all evils which admit a remedy, impatience is to be avoided, because it wastes that time and attention in complaints, that, if properly applied, might remove the cause. Turenne, among the acknowledgments which he used to pay in conversation to the memory of those by whom he had been instructed in the art of war, mentioned one with honour who taught him not to spend his time in regretting any mistake which he had made, but to set himself immediately and vigorously to repair it.

Patience and submission are very carefully to be distinguished from cowardice and indolence. We are not to repine, but we may lawfully struggle, for the calamities of life, like the necessities of nature, are calls to labour and exercises of diligence. When we feel any pressure of distress, we are not to conclude that we can only obey the will of Heaven by languishing under it, any more than when we perceive the pain of thirst, we are to imagine that water is prohibited. Of misfortune it never can be certainly known whether, as proceeding from the hand of God, it is an act of favour or of punishment: but since all the ordinary dispensations of Providence are to be interpreted according to the general analogy of things, we may conclude that we have a right to remove one inconvenience as well as another; that we are only to take care lest we purchase ease with guilt; and that our Maker's purpose, whether of reward or severity, will be answered by the labours which he lays us under the necessity of performing.

This duty is not more difficult in any state than

in diseases intensely painful, which may indeed suffer such exacerbations as seem to strain the powers of life to their utmost stretch, and leave very little of the attention vacant to precept or reproof. In this state the nature of man requires some indulgence, and every extravagance but impiety may be easily forgiven him. Yet, lest we should think ourselves too soon entitled to the mournful privileges of irresistible misery, it is proper to reflect, that the utmost anguish which human wit can contrive or human malice can inflict has been borne with constancy; and that, if the pains of disease be, as I believe they are, sometimes greater than those of artificial torture, they are therefore, in their own nature, shorter: the vital frame is quickly broken, or the union between soul and body is for a time suspended by insensibility, and we soon cease to feel our maladies when they once become too violent to be borne. I think there is some reason for questioning whether the body and mind are not so proportioned that the one can bear all that can be inflicted on the other, whether virtue cannot stand its ground as long as life, and whether a soul well principled will not be separated sooner than subdued.

In calamities which operate chiefly on our passions, such as diminution of fortune, loss of friends, or declension of character, the chief danger of impatience is upon the first attack, and many expedients have been contrived by which the blow may be broken. Of these the most general precept is, not to take pleasure in anything of which it is not in our power to secure the possession to ourselves. This counsel, when we consider the enjoyment of any terrestrial advantage, as opposite to a constant and habitual solicitude for future felicity, is undoubtedly just, and delivered by that authority which cannot be disputed; but in any other sense is it not like advice, not to walk lest we should stumble, or not to see lest our eyes should light upon deform-

ity! It seems to me reasonable to enjoy blessings with confidence as well as to resign them with submission, and to hope for the continuance of good which we possess without insolence or voluptuousness, as for the restitution of that which we lose without despondency or murmurs.

The chief security against the fruitless anguish of impatience must rise from frequent reflection on the wisdom and goodness of the God of nature, in whose hands are riches and poverty, honour and disgrace, pleasure and pain, and life and death. A settled conviction of the tendency of everything to our good, and of the possibility of turning miseries into happiness, by receiving them rightly, will incline us to *bless the name of the Lord, whether he gives or takes away.*

LABOUR AND REST; AN ALLEGORY.

Alternate rest and labour long endure."

Ovid.

IN the early ages of the world, as is well known to those who are versed in ancient traditions, when innocence was yet untainted and simplicity unadulterated, mankind was happy in the enjoyment of continual pleasure and constant plenty under the protection of Rest; a gentle divinity, who required of her worshippers neither altars nor sacrifices, and whose rites were only performed by prostrations upon turfs of flowers in shades of jasmine and myrtle, or by dances on the banks of rivers flowing with milk and nectar.

Under this easy government the first generations breathed the fragrance of perpetual spring, ate the fruits which, without culture, fell ripe into their

hands, and slept under bowers arched by nature, with the birds singing over their heads, and the beasts sporting about them. But by degrees they began to lose their original integrity ; each, though there was more than enough for all, was desirous of appropriating part to himself. Then entered Violence and Fraud, and Theft, and Rapine. Soon after Pride and Envy broke into the world, and brought with them a new standard of wealth ; for men who till then thought themselves rich when they wanted nothing, now rated their demands, not by the call of nature, but by the plenty of others ; and began to consider themselves as poor when they beheld their own possessions exceeded by those of their neighbours. Now only one could be happy, because only one could have most, and that one was always in danger, lest the same arts by which he had supplanted others should be practised upon himself.

Amid the prevalence of this corruption the state of the earth was changed ; the year was divided into seasons : part of the ground became barren, and the rest yielded only berries, acorns, and herbs. The summer and autumn, indeed, furnished a coarse and inelegant sufficiency, but winter was without any relief ; Famine, with a thousand diseases which the inclemency of the air invited into the upper regions, made havoc among men, and there appeared to be danger lest they should be destroyed before they were reformed.

To oppose the devastations of Famine, who scattered the ground everywhere with carcasses, Labour came down upon earth. Labour was the son of Necessity, the nursling of Hope, and the pupil of Art ; he had the strength of his mother, the spirit of his nurse, and the dexterity of his governess. His face was wrinkled with the wind and swarthy with the sun : he had the implements of husbandry in one hand, with which he turned up the earth ; in the other he had the tools of architecture, and raised

walls and towers at his pleasure. He called out with a rough voice, "Mortals! see here the power to whom you are consigned, and from whom you are to hope for all your pleasures and all your safety. You have long languished under the dominion of Rest, an impotent and deceitful goddess, who can neither protect nor relieve you, but resigns you to the first attacks of either Famine or Disease, and suffers her shades to be invaded by every enemy, and destroyed by every accident.

"Awake, therefore, to the call of Labour. I will teach you to remedy the sterility of the earth and the severity of the sky; I will compel summer to find provisions for the winter; I will force the waters to give you their fish, the air its fowls, and the forest its beasts; I will teach you to pierce the bowels of the earth, and bring out from the caverns of the mountains metals which shall give strength to your hands and security to your bodies, by which you may be covered from the assaults of the fiercest beasts, and with which you shall fell the oak, and divide rocks, and subject all nature to your use and pleasure."

Encouraged by this magnificent invitation, the inhabitants of the globe considered Labour as their only friend, and hastened to his command. He led them out to the fields and mountains, and showed them how to open mines, to level hills, to drain marshes, and change the course of rivers. The face of things was immediately transformed; the land was covered with towns and villages, encompassed with fields of corn and plantations of fruit-trees: and nothing was seen but heaps of grain and baskets of fruit, full tables and crowded storehouses.

Thus Labour and his followers added every hour new acquisitions to their conquests, and saw Famine gradually dispossessed of his dominions; till at last, amid their jollity and triumphs, they were depressed and amazed by the approach of Lassi-

tude, who was known by her sunk eyes and dejected countenance. She came forward trembling and groaning ; at every groan the hearts of all those that behold her lost their courage, their nerves slackened, their hands shook, and the instruments of labour fell from their grasp.

Shocked with this horrid phantom, they reflected with regret on their easy compliance with the solicitations of Labour, and began to wish again for the golden hours which they remembered to have passed under the reign of Rest, whom they resolved again to visit, and to whom they intended to dedicate the remaining part of their lives. Rest had not left the world ; they quickly found her ; and, to atone for their former desertion, invited her to the enjoyment of those acquisitions which Labour had procured them.

Rest therefore took leave of the groves and valleys which she had hitherto inhabited, and entered into palaces, reposed herself in alcoves, and slumbered away the winter upon beds of down, and the summer in artificial grottoes, with cascades playing before her. There was, indeed, always something wanting to complete her felicity, and she could never lull her returning fugitives to that serenity which they knew before their engagements with Labour : nor was her dominion entirely without control, for she was obliged to share it with Luxury, though she always looked upon her as a false friend, by whom her influence was in reality destroyed while it seemed to be promoted.

The two soft associates, however, reigned for some time without visible disagreement, till at last Luxury betrayed her charge, and let in Disease to seize upon her worshippers. Rest then flew away, and left the place to the usurpers, who employed all their arts to fortify themselves in their possession, and to strengthen the interest of each other.

Rest had not always the same enemy ; in some

places she escaped the incursions of Disease; but had her residence invaded by a more slow and subtle intruder; for very frequently, when everything was composed and quiet, when there was neither pain within nor danger without, when every flower was in bloom and every gale freighted with perfumes, Satiety would enter with a languishing and repining look, and throw herself upon the couch placed and adorned for the accommodation of Rest. No sooner was she seated than a general gloom spread itself on every side; the groves immediately lost their verdure, and their inhabitants desisted from their melody, the breeze sunk in sighs, and the flowers contracted their leaves, and shut up their odours. Nothing was seen on every side but multitudes wandering about they knew not whither, in quest they knew not of what; no voice was heard but of complaints that mentioned no pain, and murmurs that could tell of no misfortune.

Rest had now lost her authority. Her followers again began to treat her with contempt; some of them united themselves more closely to Luxury, who promised by her arts to drive Satiety away; and others, that were more wise or had more fortitude, went back to Labour, by whom they were indeed protected from Satiety, but delivered up in time to Lassitude, and forced by her to the bowers of Rest.

Thus Rest and Labour equally perceived their reign of short duration and uncertain tenure, and their empire liable to inroads from those who were alike enemies to both. They each found their subjects unfaithful, and ready to desert them upon every opportunity. Labour saw the riches which he had given always carried away as an offering to Rest, and Rest found her votaries in every exigence flying from her to beg help of Labour. They therefore, at last, determined upon an interview, in which they agreed to divide the world between them, and

govern it alternately, allotting the dominion of the day to the one, and that of the night to the other; and promised to guard the frontiers of each other, so that, whenever hostilities were attempted, Satiety should be intercepted by Labour, and Lassitude expelled by Rest. Thus the ancient quarrel was appeased, and as hatred is often succeeded by its contrary, Rest afterward became pregnant by Labour, and was delivered of Health, a benevolent goddess, who consolidated the union of her parents, and contributed to the regular vicissitudes of their reign by dispensing her gifts to those only who shared their lives in just proportions between Rest and Labour.

A STATE OF MEDIOCRITY MOST FAVOURABLE TO HAPPINESS AND VIRTUE.

"The man within the golden mean,
Who can his boldest wish contain,
Securely views the ruin'd cell,
Where sordid want and sorrow dwell;
And in himself serenely great,
Declines an envied room of state."

HOR.—FRANCIS'S *Trans.*

AMONG many parallels which men of imagination have drawn between the natural and moral state of the world, it has been observed that happiness, as well as virtue, consists in mediocrity; that to avoid every extreme is necessary, even to him who has no other care than to pass through the present state with ease and safety; that the middle path is the road of security, on either side of which are not only the pitfalls of vice, but the precipices of ruin.

Thus the maxim of Cleobulus the Lindian, μέτρον

ἁπλοῦς, mediocrity is best, has been long considered as a universal principle, extended through the whole compass of life and nature. The experience of every age seems to have given it new confirmation, and to show that nothing, however specious or alluring, is pursued with propriety or enjoyed with safety beyond certain limits.

Even the gifts of nature, which may truly be considered as the most solid and durable of all terrestrial advantages, are found, when they exceed the middle point, to draw the possessor into many calamities, easily avoided by others that have been less bountifully enriched or adorned. We see every day women perish with infamy by having been too willing to set their beauty to show; and others, though not with equal guilt or misery, yet with very sharp remorse, languishing in decay, neglect, and obscurity, for having rated their youthful charms at too high a price. And, indeed, if the opinion of Bacon be thought to deserve much regard, very few sighs would be vented for eminent and superlative elegance of form; "for beautiful women," says he, "are seldom of any great accomplishments, because they, for the most part, study behaviour rather than virtue."

Health and vigour, and a happy constitution of the corporeal frame, are of absolute necessity to the enjoyment of the comforts and to the performance of the duties of life, and requisite in yet a greater measure to the accomplishment of anything illustrious or distinguished; yet even these, if we can judge by their apparent consequences, are sometimes not very beneficial to those on whom they are most liberally bestowed. They that frequent the chambers of the sick will generally find the sharpest pains and most stubborn maladies among them whom confidence of the force of nature formerly betrayed to negligence and irregularity; and that superfluity of strength, which was at once their

boast and their snare, has often, in the latter part of life, no other effect than that it continues them long in impotence and anguish.

These gifts of nature are, however, always blessings in themselves, and to be acknowledged with gratitude to Him that gives them; since they are, in their regular and legitimate effects, productive of happiness, and prove pernicious only by voluntary corruption or idle negligence. And as there is little danger of pursuing them with too much ardour or anxiety, because no skill or diligence can hope to procure them, the uncertainty of their influence upon our lives is mentioned, not to depreciate their real value, but to repress the discontent and envy to which the want of them often gives occasion in those who do not suspect their own frailty, nor consider how much less is the calamity of not possessing great powers than of not using them aright.

Of all those things that make us superior to others, there is none so much within the reach of our endeavours as riches, nor anything more eagerly or constantly desired. Poverty is an evil always in our view; an evil complicated with so many circumstances of uneasiness and vexation, that every man is studious to avoid it. Some degree of riches is therefore required, that we may be exempt from the gripe of necessity; when this purpose is once attained, we naturally wish for more, that the evil which is regarded with so much horror may be yet at a greater distance from us; as he that has once felt or dreaded the paw of a savage will not be at rest till they are parted by some barrier which may take away all possibility of a second attack.

To this point, if fear be not unreasonably indulged, Cleobulus would, perhaps, not refuse to extend his mediocrity. But it almost always happens that the man who grows rich changes his notions of poverty. states his wants by some new

measure, and from flying the enemy that pursued him, bends his endeavours to overtake those whom he sees before him. The power of gratifying his appetites increases their demands; a thousand wishes crowd in upon him, importunate to be satisfied, and vanity and ambition open prospects to desire, which still grow wider as they are more contemplated.

Thus, in time, want is enlarged without bounds: an eagerness for the increase of possessions deluges the soul, and we sink into the gulfs of insatiability; only because we do not sufficiently consider that all real need is very soon supplied, and all real danger of its invasion easily precluded; that the claims of vanity, being without limits, must be denied at last; and that the pain of repressing them is less pungent before they have been long accustomed to compliance.

Whosoever shall look heedfully upon those who are eminent for their riches, will not think their condition such as that he should hazard his quiet, and much less his virtue, to obtain it. For all that great wealth generally gives above a moderate fortune, is more room for the freaks of caprice, and more privilege for ignorance and vice, a quicker succession of flatteries, and a larger circle of voluptuousness.

There is one reason, seldom remarked, which makes riches less desirable. Too much wealth is very frequently the occasion of poverty. He whom the wantonness of abundance has once softened, easily sinks into neglect of his affairs; and he that thinks he can afford to be negligent, is not far from being poor. He will soon be involved in perplexities which his inexperience will render insurmountable; he will fly for help to those whose interest it is that he should be more distressed, and will be at last torn to pieces by the vultures that always hover over fortunes in decay.

When the plains of India were burned up by a long continuance of drought, Hamet and Raschid, two neighbouring shepherds, faint with thirst, stood at the common boundary of their grounds, with their flocks and herds panting round them, and in extremity of distress prayed for water. On a sudden the air was becalmed, the birds ceased to chirp, and the flocks to bleat. They turned their eyes every way, and saw a being of mighty stature advancing through the valley, whom they knew, upon his nearer approach, to be the Genius of Distribution. In one hand he held the sheaves of plenty, and in the other the sabre of destruction. The shepherds stood trembling, and would have retired before him; but he called to them with a voice gentle as the breeze that plays in the evening among the spices of Sabæa: "Fly not from your benefactor, children of the dust! I am come to offer you gifts which only your own folly can make vain. You here pray for water, and water I will bestow; let me know with how much you will be satisfied: speak not rashly; consider, that of whatever can be enjoyed by the body, excess is no less dangerous than scarcity. When you remember the pain of thirst, do not forget the danger of suffocation. Now, Hamet, tell me your request."

"Oh Being, kind and beneficent," says Hamet, "let thine eye pardon my confusion. I entreat a little brook, which in summer shall never be dry, and in winter never overflow." "It is granted," replies the Genius; and immediately he opened the ground with his sabre, and a fountain, bubbling up under their feet, scattered its rills over the meadows: the flowers renewed their fragrance, the trees spread a greener foliage, and the flocks and herds quenched their thirst.

Then turning to Raschid, the Genius invited him likewise to offer his petition. "I request," says Raschid, "that thou wilt turn the Ganges through

my grounds, with all his waters and all their inhabitants." Hamet was struck with the greatness of his neighbour's sentiments, and secretly repined in his heart that he had not made the same petition before him; when the Genius spoke, "Rash man, be not so insatiable! Remember, to thee that is nothing which thou canst not use; and how are thy wants greater than the wants of Hamet?" Raschid repeated his desire, and pleased himself with the mean appearance that Hamet would make in the presence of the proprietor of the Ganges. The Genius then retired towards the river, and the two shepherds stood waiting the event. As Raschid was looking with contempt upon his neighbour, on a sudden was heard the roar of torrents, and they found by the mighty stream that the mounds of the Ganges were broken. The flood rolled forward into the lands of Raschid, his plantations were torn up, his flocks overwhelmed, he was swept away before it, and a crocodile devoured him.

MEMORY BRINGS SATISFACTION ONLY TO THE GOOD.

"No day's remembrance shall the good regret,
Nor wish one bitter moment to forget;
They stretch the limits of this narrow span,
And, by enjoying, live past life again."

MART.—F. LEWIS'S *Trans.*

So few of the hours of life are filled up with objects adequate to the mind of man, and so frequently are we in want of present pleasure or employment, that we are forced to have recourse every moment to the past and future for supplemental satisfactions, and relieve the vacuities of

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our being by recollection of former passages or anticipation of events to come.

I cannot but consider this necessity of searching on every side for matter on which the attention may be employed as a strong proof of the superior and celestial nature of the soul of man. We have no reason to believe that other creatures have higher faculties or more extensive capacities than the preservation of themselves or their species requires; they seem always to be fully employed, or to be completely at ease without employment, to feel few intellectual miseries or pleasures, and to have no exuberance of understanding to lay out upon curiosity or caprice, but to have their minds exactly adapted to their bodies, with few other ideas than such as corporeal pain or pleasure impress upon them.

Of memory, which makes so large a part of the excellence of the human soul, and which has so much influence upon all its other powers, but a small portion has been allotted to the animal world. We do not find the grief with which the dams lament the loss of their young proportionate to the tenderness with which they caress, the assiduity with which they feed, or the vehemence with which they defend them. Their regard for their offspring, when it is before their eyes, is not, in appearance, less than that of a human parent; but when it is taken away it is very soon forgotten, and, after a short absence, if brought again, wholly disregarded.

That they have very little remembrance of anything once out of the reach of their senses, and scarce any power of comparing the present with the past, and regulating their conclusions from experience, may be gathered from this, that their intellects are produced in their full perfection. The sparrow that was hatched last spring makes her first nest the ensuing season of the same materials and with the same art as in any following year.

and the hen conducts and shelters her first brood of chickens with all the prudence that she ever attains.

It has been asked by men who love to perplex anything that is plain to common understandings, how reason differs from instinct: and Prior has, with no great propriety, made Solomon himself declare, that to distinguish them is *the fool's ignorance and the pedant's pride*. To give an accurate answer to a question, of which the terms are not completely understood, is impossible; we do not know in what either reason or instinct consist, and therefore cannot tell with exactness how they differ; but surely he that contemplates a ship and a bird's nest will not be long without finding out that the idea of the one was impressed at once, and continued through all the progressive descents of the species without variation or improvement; and that the other is the result of experiments compared with experiments; has grown by accumulated observation from less to greater excellence, and exhibits the collective knowledge of different ages and various professions.

Memory is the purveyor of reason, the power which places those images before the mind upon which the judgment is to be exercised, and which treasures up the determinations that are once passed as the rules of future action or grounds of subsequent conclusions.

It is, indeed, the faculty of remembrance, which may be said to place us in the class of moral agents. If we were to act only in consequence of some immediate impulse, and receive no direction from internal motives of choice, we should be pushed forward by an invincible fatality, without power or reason for the most part to prefer one thing to another, because we could make no comparison but of objects which might both happen to be present.

We owe to memory not only the increase of our

knowledge and our progress in rational inquiries, but many other intellectual pleasures. Indeed, almost all that we can be said to enjoy is past or future; the present is in perpetual motion, leaves us as soon as it arrives, ceases to be present before its presence is well perceived, and is only known to have existed by the effects which it leaves behind. The greatest part of our ideas arises, therefore, from the view before or behind us, and we are happy or miserable according as we are affected by the survey of our life or our prospect of future existence.

With regard to futurity, when events are at such a distance from us that we cannot take the whole concatenation into our view, we have generally power enough over our imagination to turn it upon pleasing scenes, and can promise ourselves riches, honours, and delights without intermingling those vexations and anxieties with which all human enjoyments are polluted. If fear breaks on one side, and alarms us with dangers and disappointments, we can call in hope on the other, to solace us with rewards, and escapes, and victories; so that we are seldom without means of palliating remote evils, and can generally sooth ourselves to tranquillity whenever any troublesome presage happens to attack us.

It is therefore, I believe, much more common for the solitary and thoughtful to amuse themselves with schemes of the future than reviews of the past. For the future is plain and ductile, and will be easily moulded by a strong fancy into any form; but the images which memory presents are of a stubborn and untractable nature; the objects of remembrance have already existed, and left their signature behind them impressed upon the mind, so as to defy all attempts of rasure or of change.

As the satisfactions, therefore, arising from memory are less arbitrary, they are more solid, and are,

indeed, the only joys which we can call our own. Whatever we have once repositied, as Dryden expresses it, *in the sacred treasure of the past*, is out of the reach of accident or violence, nor can be lost either by our own weakness or another's malice :

“ Be fair or foul, or rain or shine,
 The joys I have possess'd, in spite of fate are mine
 Nor Heaven itself upon the past has power,
 But what has been, has been, and I have had my hour.”
 DRYDEN.

There is certainly no greater happiness than to be able to look back on a life usefully and virtuously employed, to trace our own progress in existence by such tokens as excite neither shame nor sorrow. Life, in which nothing has been done or suffered, to distinguish one day from another, is to him that has passed it as if it had never been, except that he is conscious how ill he has husbanded the great deposit of his Creator. Life, made memorable by crimes, and diversified through its several periods by wickedness, is indeed easily reviewed, but reviewed only with horror and remorse.

The great consideration which ought to influence us in the use of the present moment, is to arise from the effect which, as well or ill applied, it must have upon the time to come ; for though its actual existence be inconceivably short, yet its effects are unlimited ; and there is not the smallest point of time but may extend its consequences, either to our hurt or our advantage, through all eternity, and give us reason to remember it for ever with anguish or exultation.

The time of life in which memory seems particularly to claim predominance over the other faculties of the mind, is our declining age. It has been remarked by former writers, that old men are generally narrative, and fall easily into recitals of past transactions, and accounts of persons known to

them in their youth. When we approach the verge of the grave it is more eminently true :

“ Life’s span forbids thee to extend thy cares,
And stretch thy hopes beyond thy years.”

CREECH.

We have no longer any possibility of great vicissitudes in our favour : the changes which are to happen in the world will come too late for our accommodation ; and those who have no hope before them, and to whom their present state is painful and irksome, must of necessity turn their thoughts back to try what retrospect will afford. It ought, therefore, to be the care of those who wish to pass the last hours with comfort, to lay up such a treasure of pleasing ideas as shall support the expenses of that time which is to depend wholly upon the fund already acquired.

“ Seek here, ye young, the anchor of your mind ;
Here, suffering age, a bless’d provision find.”

ELPHINSTON.

In youth, however happy, we solace ourselves with the hope of better fortune, and however vicious, appease our consciences with intentions of repentance ; but the time comes at last, in which life has no more to promise, in which happiness can be drawn only from recollection, and virtue will be all that we can recollect with pleasure.

NOTHING GREAT TO BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT PERSEVERANCE.

“ In course impetuous soon the torrent dries,
The brook a constant, peaceful stream supplies.”

OVID.—F. LEWIS’s *Trans.*

It is observed by those who have written on the constitution of the human body, and the original of

those diseases by which it is afflicted, that every man comes into the world morbid; that there is no temperature so exactly regulated but that some humour is fatally predominant; and that we are generally impregnated, in our first entrance upon life, with the seeds of that malady which, in time, shall bring us to the grave.

This remark has been extended by others to the intellectual faculties. Some, that imagine themselves to have looked with more than common penetration into human nature, have endeavoured to persuade us that each man is born with a mind formed peculiarly for certain purposes, and with desires unalterably determined to particular objects, from which the attention cannot be long diverted, and which alone, as they are well or ill pursued, must produce the praise or blame, the happiness or misery of his future life.

This position has not, indeed, been hitherto proved with strength proportionate to the assurance with which it has been advanced, and perhaps will never gain much prevalence by a close examination.

If the doctrine of innate ideas be itself disputable, there seems to be little hope of establishing an opinion, which supposes that even complications of ideas have been given us at our birth, and that we are made by nature ambitious or covetous before we know the meaning of either power or money.

Yet, as every step in the progression of existence changes our position with respect to the things about us, so as to lay us open to new assaults and particular dangers, and subjects us to inconveniences from which any other situation is exempt; as a public or a private life, youth and age, wealth and poverty, have all some evil closely adherent, which cannot wholly be escaped but by quitting the state to which it is annexed, and submitting to the en-

cumbrances of some other condition, so it cannot be denied that every difference in the structure of mind has its advantages and its wants; and that failures and defects being inseparable from humanity, however the powers of understanding be extended or contracted, there will, on one side or the other, always be an avenue to error and miscarriage.

There seem to be some souls suited to great, and others to little employments: some formed to soar aloft, and take in wide views, and others to grovel on the ground, and confine their regard to a narrow sphere. Of these the one is always in danger of becoming useless by a daring negligence, the other by a scrupulous solicitude: the one collects many ideas, but confused and indistinct; the other is busied in minute accuracy, but without compass and without dignity.

The general error of those who possess powerful and elevated understandings is, that they form schemes of too great extent, and flatter themselves too hastily with success; they feel their own force to be great, and by the complacency with which every man surveys himself, imagine it still greater: they therefore look out for undertakings worthy of their abilities, and engage in them with very little precaution, for they imagine that without premeditated measures they shall be able to find expedients in all difficulties. They are naturally apt to consider all prudential maxims as below their regard, to treat with contempt those securities and resources which others know themselves obliged to provide, and disdain to accomplish their purposes by established means and common gradations.

Precipitation, thus incited by the pride of intellectual superiority, is very fatal to great designs. The resolution of the combat is seldom equal to the vehemence of the charge. He that meets with an opposition which he did not expect, loses his

courage. The violence of his first onset is succeeded by a lasting and unconquerable languor miscarriage makes him fearful of giving way to new hopes; and the contemplation of an attempt in which he has fallen below his own expectations is painful and vexatious; he therefore naturally turns his attention to more pleasing objects, and habituates his imagination to other entertainments, till, by slow degrees, he quits his first pursuit, and suffers some other project to take possession of his thoughts, in which the same ardour of mind promises him again certain success, and which disappointments of the same kind compel him to abandon.

Thus too much vigour in the beginning of an undertaking often intercepts and prevents the steadiness and perseverance always necessary in the conduct of a complicated scheme, where many interests are to be connected, many movements to be adjusted, and the joint effort of distinct and independent powers to be directed to a single point. In all important events which have been suddenly brought to pass, chance has been the agent rather than reason; and therefore, however those who seemed to preside in the transaction may have been celebrated by such as loved or feared them, succeeding times have commonly considered them as fortunate rather than prudent. Every design in which the connexion is regularly traced from the first motion to the last, must be formed and executed with calm intrepidity, and requires not only courage which danger cannot turn aside, but constancy which fatigues cannot weary, and contrivance which impediments cannot exhaust.

All the performances of human art, at which we look with praise or wonder, are instances of the resistless force of perseverance; it is by this that the quarry becomes a pyramid, and that distant countries are united with canals. If a man was to compare the effect of a single stroke of the pick-

axe, or of one impression of the spade, with the general design and last result, he would be overwhelmed by the sense of their disproportion; yet those petty operations, incessantly continued, in time surmount the greatest difficulties, and mountains are levelled and oceans bounded by the slender force of human beings.

It is therefore of the utmost importance that those who have any intention of deviating from the beaten roads of life, and acquiring a reputation superior to names hourly swept away by time among the refuse of fame, should add to their reason and their spirit the power of persisting in their purposes; acquire the art of sapping what they cannot batter, and the habit of vanquishing obstinate resistance by obstinate attacks.

The student who would build his knowledge on solid foundations, and proceed by just degrees to the pinnacles of truth, is directed by the great philosopher of France to begin by doubting of his own existence. In like manner, whoever would complete any arduous and intricate enterprise, should, as soon as his imagination can cool after the first blaze of hope, place before his own eyes every possible embarrassment that may retard or defeat him. He should first question the probability of success, and then endeavour to remove the objections he has raised. It is proper, says old Markham,* to exercise your horse on the more inconvenient side of the course, that if he should, in the race, be forced upon it he may not be discouraged; and Horace advises his poetical friend to consider every day as the last which he shall enjoy, because that will always give pleasure which we receive beyond our hopes. If we alarm ourselves beforehand with more difficulties than we really find, we shall be animated by

* Gervase Markham, in his book entitled "Perfect Horsemanship," 12mo, 1761. He was a dramatic poet, and a voluminous writer on various subjects.

unexpected facility with double spirit; and if we find our cautions and fears justified by the consequence, there will, however, happen nothing against which provision has not been made; no sudden shock will be received, nor will the main scheme be disconcerted.

There is, indeed, some danger lest he that too scrupulously balances probabilities, and too perspicaciously foresees obstacles, should remain always in a state of inaction, without venturing upon attempts on which he may perhaps spend his labour without advantage. But previous despondence is not the fault of those for whom this essay is designed; they who require to be warned against precipitation will not suffer more fear to intrude into their contemplations than is necessary to allay the effervescence of an agitated fancy. As Des Cartes has kindly shown how a man may prove to himself his own existence, if once he can be prevailed upon to question it, so the ardent and adventurous will not be long without finding some plausible extenuation of the greatest difficulties. Such, indeed, is the uncertainty of all human affairs, that security and despair are equal follies; and as it is presumption and arrogance to anticipate triumphs, it is weakness and cowardice to prognosticate mis-carriages. The numbers that have been stopped in their career of happiness are sufficient to show the uncertainty of human foresight; but there are not wanting contrary instances of such success, obtained against all appearances, as may warrant the boldest flights of genius if they are supported by unshaken perseverance.

RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION CONTRASTED.

“Dreams descend from Jove.”

HOMER.—POPE'S *Trans.*

I HAD lately a very remarkable dream, which made so strong an impression on me that I remember it every word.

Methought I was in the midst of a very entertaining set of company, and extremely delighted in attending to a lively conversation, when, on a sudden, I perceived one of the most shocking figures imagination can frame advancing towards me. She was dressed in black, her skin was contracted into a thousand wrinkles, her eyes deep sunk in her head, and her complexion pale and livid as the countenance of death. Her looks were filled with terror and unrelenting severity, and her hands armed with whips and scorpions. As soon as she came near, with a horrid frown and a voice that chilled my very blood, she bid me follow her. I obeyed, and she led me through rugged paths, beset with briers and thorns, into a deep solitary valley. Wherever she passed the fading verdure withered beneath her steps; her pestilential breath infected the air with malignant vapours, obscured the lustre of the sun, and involved the fair face of heaven in universal gloom. Dismal howlings resounded through the forest; from every baleful tree the night-raven uttered his dreadful note, and the prospect was filled with desolation and horror. In the midst of this tremendous scene my execrable guide addressed me in the following manner:

“Retire with me, oh rash, unthinking mortal, from the vain allurements of a deceitful world, and

learn that pleasure was not designed the portion of human life. Man was born to mourn and to be wretched; this is the condition of all below the stars, and whoever endeavours to oppose it acts in contradiction to the will of Heaven. Fly, then, from the fatal enchantments of youth and social delight, and here consecrate the solitary hours to lamentation and wo. Misery is the duty of all sublunary beings, and every enjoyment is an offence to the Deity, who is to be worshipped only by the mortification of every sense of pleasure, and the everlasting exercise of sighs and tears."

This melancholy picture of life quite sunk my spirits, and seemed to annihilate every principle of joy within me. I threw myself beneath a blasted yew, where the winds blew cold and dismal round my head, and dreadful apprehensions chilled my heart. Here I resolved to lie till the hand of death, which I impatiently invoked, should put an end to the miseries of a life so deplorably wretched. In this sad situation I espied on one hand of me a deep, muddy river, whose heavy waves rolled on in slow, sullen murmurs. Here I determined to plunge, and was just upon the brink, when I found myself suddenly drawn back. I turned about, and was surprised by the sight of the loveliest object I had ever beheld. The most engaging charms of youth and beauty appeared in all her form: effulgent glories sparkled in her eyes, and their awful splendours were softened by the gentlest looks of compassion and peace. At her approach the frightful spectre who had before tormented me vanished away, and with her all the horrors she had caused. The gloomy clouds brightened into cheerful sunshine, the groves recovered their verdure, and the whole region looked gay and blooming as the garden of Eden. I was quite transported at this unexpected change, and reviving pleasure began to glad my thoughts, when, with a look of inexpress

ible sweetness, my beauteous deliverer thus uttered her divine instructions :

“My name is Religion. I am the offspring of Truth and Love, and the parent of Benevolence, Hope, and Joy. That monster from whose power I have freed you is called Superstition ; she is the child of Discontent, and her followers are Fear and Sorrow. Thus different as we are, she has often the insolence to assume my name and character, and seduces unhappy mortals to think us the same, till she at length drives them to the borders of despair, that dreadful abyss into which you were just going to sink.

“Look round and survey the various beauties of the globe, which Heaven has destined for the seat of the human race, and consider whether a world thus exquisitely framed could be meant for the abode of misery and pain. For what end has the lavish hand of Providence diffused such innumerable objects of delight, but that all might rejoice in the privilege of existence, and be filled with gratitude to the beneficent Author of it ? Thus to enjoy the blessings he has sent is virtue and obedience ; and to reject them, merely as means of pleasure, is pitiable ignorance or absurd perverseness. Infinite goodness is the source of created existence ; the proper tendency of every rational being, from the highest order of raptured seraphs to the meanest rank of men, is to rise incessantly from lower degrees of happiness to higher. They have each faculties assigned them for various orders of delights.’

“What,” cried I, “is this the language of Religion ? Does she lead her votaries through flowery paths, and bid them pass an unlaborious life ? Where are the painful toils of virtue, the mortifications of penitence, the self-denying exercises of saints and heroes ?”

“The true enjoyments of a reasonable being,” answered she, mildly, “do not consist in unbounded

indulgence or luxurious ease, in the tumult of passions, the languor of indolence, or the flutter of light amusements. Yielding to immoral pleasure corrupts the mind, living to animal and trifling ones debases it: both in their degree disqualify it for its genuine good, and consign it over to wretchedness. Whoever would be really happy must make the diligent and regular exercise of his superior powers his chief attention, adoring the perfections of his Maker, expressing good-will to his fellow-creatures, cultivating inward rectitude. To his lower faculties he must allow such gratifications as will, by refreshing him, invigorate his nobler pursuits. In the regions inhabited by angelic natures, unmingled felicity for ever blooms, joy flows there with a perpetual and abundant stream, nor needs there any mound to check its course. Beings conscious of a frame of mind originally diseased, as all the human race has cause to be, must use the regimen of a strict self-government. Whoever has been guilty of voluntary excesses must patiently submit both to the painful workings of nature, and needful severities of medicine, in order to his cure. Still he is entitled to a moderate share of whatever alleviating accommodations this fair mansion of his merciful Parent affords, consistent with his recovery. And in proportion as this recovery advances, the liveliest joy will spring from his secret sense of an amended and improving heart. So far from the horrors of despair is the condition even of the guilty. Shudder, poor mortal, at the thought of the gulf into which thou wast but now going to plunge.

“While the most faulty have ever encouragement to amend, the more innocent soul will be supported with still sweeter consolations under all its experience of human infirmities; supported by the gladdening assurances that every sincere endeavour to outgrow them shall be assisted, accepted, and rewarded. To such a one the lowliest self-abasement

is but a deep-laid foundation for the most elevated hopes ; since they who faithfully examine and acknowledge what they are, shall be enabled under my conduct to become what they desire. The Christian and the hero are inseparable ; and to aspirings of unassuming trust and filial confidence are set no bounds. To him who is animated with a view of obtaining approbation from the Sovereign of the universe, no difficulty is insurmountable. Secure in this pursuit of every needful aid, his conflict with the severest pains and trials is little more than the vigorous exercise of a mind in health. His patient dependance on that Providence which looks through all eternity, his silent resignation, his ready accommodation of his thoughts and behaviour to its inscrutable ways, is at once the most excellent sort of self-denial, and a source of the most exalted transports. Society is the true sphere of human virtue. In social, active life, difficulties will perpetually be met with ; restraints of many kinds will be necessary ; and studying to behave right in respect of these is a discipline of the human heart, useful to others and improving to itself. Suffering is no duty but where it is necessary to avoid guilt or to do good, nor pleasure a crime but where it strengthens the influence of bad inclinations or lessens the generous activity of virtue. The happiness allotted to man in his present state is indeed faint and low compared with his immortal prospects and noble capacities ; but yet, whatever portion of it the distributing hand of Heaven offers to each individual, is a needful support and refreshment for the present moment, so far as it may not hinder the attaining of his final destination.

“ Return, then, with me from continual misery to moderate enjoyment and grateful alacrity. Return from the contracted views of solitude to the proper duties of a relative and dependant being. Religion is not confined to cells and closets, nor restrained

to sullen retirement. These are the gloomy doctrines of Superstition, by which she endeavours to break those chains of benevolence and social affection that link the welfare of every particular with that of the whole. Remember that the greatest honour you can pay to the Author of your being is by such a cheerful behaviour as discovers a mind satisfied with his dispensations."

Here my preceptress paused, and I was going to express my acknowledgments for her discourse, when a ring of bells from the neighbouring village, and a new rising sun darting his beams through my windows, awakened me.*

SORROW SHOULD NOT BE IMMODERATELY INDULGED.

"These proceedings have afforded me some comfort in my distress; notwithstanding which, I am still dispirited and unhinged by the same motives of humanity that induced me to grant such indulgences. However, I by no means wish to become less susceptible of tenderness. I know these kinds of misfortunes would be estimated by other persons only as common losses, and from such sensations they would conceive themselves great and wise men. I shall not determine either their greatness or their wisdom; but I am certain they have no humanity. It is the part of a man to be affected with grief, to feel sorrow at the same time that he is to resist it, and to admit of comfort."—*PLIN.—Earl of Orrery's Trans.*

Of the passions with which the mind of man is agitated, it may be observed, that they naturally hasten towards their own extinction by inciting and quickening the attainment of their objects. Thus fear urges our flight, and desire animates our progress; and

* This paper was written by the late Mrs. Elizabeth Carter.
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if there are some which perhaps may be indulged till they outgrow the good appropriated to their satisfaction, as it is frequently observed of avarice and ambition, yet their immediate tendency is to some means of happiness really existing, and generally within the prospect. The miser always imagines that there is a certain sum that will fill his heart to the brim; and every ambitious man, like King Pyrrhus, has an acquisition in his thoughts that is to terminate his labours, after which he shall pass the rest of his life in ease or gayety, in repose or devotion.

Sorrow is perhaps the only affection of the breast that can be excepted from this general remark, and it therefore deserves the particular attention of those who have assumed the arduous province of preserving the balance of the mental constitution. The other passions are diseases indeed, but they necessarily direct us to their proper cure. A man at once feels the pain and knows the medicine, to which he is carried with greater haste as the evil which requires it is more excruciating, and cures himself by unerring instinct, as the wounded stags of Crete are related by Ælian to have recourse to vulnerary herbs. But for sorrow there is no remedy provided by nature; it is often occasioned by accidents irreparable, and dwells upon objects that have lost or changed their existence; it requires what it cannot hope, that the laws of the universe should be repealed; that the dead should return, or the past should be recalled.

Sorrow is not that regret for negligence or error which may animate us to future care or activity, or that repentance of crimes for which, however irrevocable, our Creator has promised to accept it as an atonement; the pain which arises from these causes has very salutary effects, and is every hour extenuating itself by the reparation of those miscarriages that produce it. Sorrow is properly that

state of the mind in which our desires are fixed upon the past, without looking forward to the future, an incessant wish that something were otherwise than it has been, a tormenting and harassing want of some enjoyment or possession which we have lost, and which no endeavours can possibly regain. Into such anguish many have sunk upon some sudden diminution of their fortune, an unexpected blast of their reputation, or the loss of children or of friends. They have suffered all sensibility of pleasure to be destroyed by a single blow, have given up for ever the hopes of substituting any other object in the room of that which they lament, resigned their lives to gloom and despondency, and worn themselves out in unavailing misery.

Yet so much is this passion the natural consequence of tenderness and endearment, that, however painful and however useless, it is justly reproachful not to feel it on some occasions; and so widely and constantly has it always prevailed, that the laws of some nations, and the customs of others, have limited a time for the external appearances of grief caused by the dissolution of close alliances and the breach of domestic union.

It seems determined, by the general suffrage of mankind, that sorrow is to a certain point laudable as the offspring of love, or at least pardonable as the offspring of weakness; but that it ought not to be suffered to increase by indulgence, but must give way, after a stated time, to social duties and the common avocations of life. It is at first unavoidable, and therefore must be allowed, whether with or without our choice; it may afterward be admitted as a decent and affectionate testimony of kindness and esteem; something will be extorted by nature, and something may be given to the world. But all beyond the bursts of passion or the forms of solemnity is not only useless, but culpable; for we have no right to sacrifice to the vain longings of affec-

tion that time which Providence allows us or the task of our station.

Yet it too often happens that sorrow, thus lawfully entering, gains such a firm possession of the mind, that it is not afterward to be ejected; the mournful ideas, first violently impressed and afterward willingly received, so much engross the attention as to predominate in every thought, to darken gayety, and perplex ratiocination. An habitual sadness seizes upon the soul, and the faculties are chained to a single object, which can never be contemplated but with hopeless uneasiness.

From this state of dejection it is very difficult to rise to cheerfulness and alacrity; and, therefore, many who have laid down rules of intellectual health think preservatives easier than remedies, and teach us not to indulge the luxury of fondness, but to keep our minds always suspended in such indifference that we may change the objects about us without emotion.

An exact compliance with this rule might perhaps contribute to tranquillity, but surely it would never produce happiness. He that regards none so much as to be afraid of losing them, must live for ever without the gentle pleasures of sympathy and confidence; he must feel no melting fondness, no warmth of benevolence, nor any of those honest joys which nature annexes to the power of pleasing. And as no man can justly claim more tenderness than he pays, he must forfeit his share in that officious and watchful kindness which love only can dictate, and those lenient endearments by which love only can soften life. He may justly be overlooked and neglected by such as have more warmth in their heart; for who would be the friend of him whom, with whatever assiduity he may be courted, and with whatever services obliged, his principles will not suffer to make equal returns, and who, when you have exhausted all the instances of

good will, can only be prevailed on not to be an enemy?

An attempt to preserve life in a state of neutrality and indifference is unreasonable and vain. If by excluding joy we could shut out grief, the scheme would deserve very serious attention; but since, however we may debar ourselves from happiness, misery will find its way at many inlets, and the assaults of pain will force our regard, though we may withhold it from the invitations of pleasure, we may surely endeavour to raise life above the middle point of apathy at one time, since it will necessarily sink below it at another.

But though it cannot be reasonable not to gain happiness for fear of losing it, yet it must be confessed that, in proportion to the pleasure of possession, will be for some time our sorrow for the loss; it is therefore the province of the moralist to inquire whether such pains may not quickly give way to mitigation. Some have thought that the most certain way to clear the heart from its embarrassment is to drag it by force into scenes of merriment. Others imagine that such a transition is too violent, and recommend rather to sooth it into tranquillity by making it acquainted with miseries more dreadful and afflictive, and diverting to the calamities of others the regard which we are inclined to fix too closely upon our own misfortunes.

It may be doubted whether either of those remedies will be sufficiently powerful. The efficacy of mirth it is not always easy to try, and the indulgence of melancholy may be suspected to be one of those medicines which will destroy if it happens not to cure.

The safe and general antidote against sorrow is employment. It is commonly observed, that among soldiers and seamen, though there is much kindness, there is little grief; they see their friend fall without any of that lamentation which is indulged in se-

curity and idleness, because they have no leisure to spare from the care of themselves; and whoever shall keep his thoughts equally busy, will find himself equally unaffected with irretrievable losses.

Time is observed generally to wear out sorrow, and its effects might doubtless be accelerated by quickening the succession and enlarging the variety of objects.

" 'Tis long ere time can mitigate your grief,
To wisdom fly, she quickly brings relief."

GROTIUS.—F. LEWIS'S *Trans.*

Sorrow is a kind of rust of the soul, which every new idea contributes in its passage to scour away. It is the putrefaction of stagnant life, and is remedied by exercise and motion.

HEALTH THE MOST VALUABLE OF EARTHLY BLESSINGS.

"For life is not to live, but to be well."

MART.—ELPHINSTON'S *Trans.*

AMONG the innumerable follies by which we lay up in our youth repentance and remorse for the succeeding part of our lives, there is scarce any against which warnings are of less efficacy than the neglect of health. When the springs of motion are yet elastic, when the heart bounds with vigour, and the eye sparkles with spirit, it is with difficulty that we are taught to conceive the imbecility that every hour is bringing upon us, or to imagine that the nerves which are now braced with so much strength, and the limbs which play with so much activity, will lose all their power under the gripe of time, relax with numbness, and totter with debility.

To the arguments which have been used against complaints under the miseries of life, the philosophers have, I think, forgot to add the incredulity of those to whom we recount our sufferings. But if the purpose of lamentation be to excite pity, it is surely superfluous for age and weakness to tell their plaintive stories; for pity presupposes sympathy, and a little attention will show them that those who do not feel pain seldom think that it is felt; and a short recollection will inform almost every man that he is only repaid the insult which he has given, since he may remember how often he has mocked infirmity, laughed at its cautions, and censured its impatience.

The valetudinarian race have made the care of health ridiculous by suffering it to prevail over all other considerations, as the miser has brought frugality into contempt by permitting the love of money not to share, but to engross his mind: they both err alike by confounding the means with the end; they grasp at health only to be well, as at money only to be rich; and forget that every terrestrial advantage is chiefly valuable as it furnishes abilities for the exercise of virtue.

Health is indeed so necessary to all the duties, as well as pleasures of life, that the crime of squandering it is equal to the folly; and he that for a short gratification brings weakness and diseases upon himself, and, for the pleasure of a few years passed in the tumults of diversion and clamours of merriment, condemns the maturer and more experienced part of his life to the chamber and the couch, may be justly reproached, not only as a spendthrift of his own happiness, but as a robber of the public; as a wretch that has voluntarily disqualified himself for the business of his station, and refused that part which Providence assigns him in the general task of human nature.

There are, perhaps, very few conditions more to

be pitied than that of an active and elevated mind labouring under the weight of a distempered body. The time of such a man is always spent in forming schemes which a change of wind hinders him from executing, his powers fume away in projects and in hope, and the day of action never arrives. He lies down delighted with the thoughts of to-morrow, pleases his ambition with the fame he shall acquire, or his benevolence with the good he shall confer. But in the night the skies are overcast, the temper of the air is changed; he wakes in languor, impatience, and distraction, and has no longer any wish but for ease, nor any attention but to misery. It may be said that disease generally begins that equality which death completes; the distinctions which set one man so much above another are very little perceived in the gloom of a sick chamber, where it will be vain to expect entertainment from the gay or instruction from the wise; where all human glory is obliterated, the wit is clouded, the reasoner perplexed, and the hero subdued; where the highest and brightest of mortal beings finds nothing left him but the consciousness of innocence.

There is among the fragments of the Greek poets a short hymn to Health, in which her power of exalting the happiness of life, of heightening the gifts of fortune, and adding enjoyment to possession, is inculcated with so much force and beauty, that no one who has ever languished under the discomforts and infirmities of a lingering disease can read it without feeling the images dance in his heart, and adding from his own experience new vigour to the wish, and from his own imagination new colours to the picture. The particular occasion of this little composition is not known, but it is probable that the author had been sick, and in the first raptures of returning vigour addressed Health in the following manner :

“Health, most venerable of the powers of heav-

en ! with thee may the remaining part of my life be passed, nor do thou refuse to bless me with thy residence. For whatever there is of beauty or of pleasure in wealth, in descendants, or in sovereign command, the highest summit of human enjoyment, or in those objects of human desire which we endeavour to chase into the toils of love ; whatever delight, or whatever solace is granted by the celestials, to soften our fatigues, in thy presence, thou parent of happiness, all those joys spread out and flourish ; in thy presence blooms the spring of pleasure, and without thee no man is happy."

Such is the power of health, that, without its co-operation, every other comfort is torpid and lifeless, as the powers of vegetation without the sun. And yet this bliss is commonly thrown away in thoughtless negligence or in foolish experiments on our own strength ; we let it perish without remembering its value, or waste it to show how much we have to spare ; it is sometimes given up to the management of levity and chance, and sometimes sold for the applause of jollity and debauchery.

Health is equally neglected, and with equal impropriety, by the votaries of business and the followers of pleasure. Some men ruin the fabric of their bodies by incessant revels, and others by intemperate studies ; some batter it by excess, and others sap it by inactivity. To the noisy rout of bacchanalian rioters, it will be to little purpose that advice is offered, though it requires no great abilities to prove that he loses pleasure who loses health ; their clamours are too loud for the whispers of caution, and they run the course of life with too much precipitance to stop at the call of wisdom. Nor perhaps will they that are busied in adding thousands to thousands pay much regard to him that shall direct them to hasten more slowly to their wishes. Yet since lovers of money are generally cool, deliberate, and thoughtful, they might surely consider that the

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greater good ought not to be sacrificed to the less. Health is certainly more valuable than money, because it is by health that money is procured ; but thousands and millions are of small avail to alleviate the protracted tortures of the gout, to repair the broken organs of sense, or resuscitate the powers of digestion. Poverty is, indeed, an evil from which we naturally fly ; but let us not run from one enemy to another, nor take shelter in the arms of sickness.

“ For healthful indigence in vain they pray,
In quest of wealth who throw their lives away.”

Those who lose their health in an irregular and impetuous pursuit of literary accomplishments are yet less to be excused ; for they ought to know that the body is not forced beyond its strength but with the loss of more vigour than is proportionate to the effect produced. Whoever takes up life beforehand, by depriving himself of rest and refreshment, must not only pay back the hours, but pay them back with usury ; and for the gain of a few months but half enjoyed, must give up years to the listlessness of languor and the implacability of pain. They whose endeavour is mental excellence, will learn, perhaps too late, how much it is endangered by diseases of the body, and find that knowledge may easily be lost in the starts of melancholy, the flights of impatience, and the peevishness of decrepitude.

THE LOVE OF FAME.

"Whole Horace shall not die ; his songs shall save
The greatest portion from the greedy grave."

HOR.—CREECH's *Trans.*

THE first motives of human actions are those appetites which Providence has given to man in common with the rest of the inhabitants of the earth. Immediately after our birth, thirst and hunger incline us to the breast, which we draw by instinct, like other young creatures, and, when we are satisfied, we express our uneasiness by importunate and incessant cries, till we have obtained a place or posture proper for repose.

The next call that rouses us from a state of inactivity is that of our passions ; we quickly begin to be sensible of hope and fear, love and hatred, desire and aversion ; these, arising from the power of comparison and reflection, extend their range wider, as our reason strengthens and our knowledge enlarges. At first we have no thought of pain but when we actually feel it ; we afterward begin to fear it, yet not before it approaches us very nearly : but by degrees we discover it at a greater distance, and find it lurking in remote consequences. Our terror in time improves into caution, and we learn to look round with vigilance and solicitude, to stop all the avenues at which misery can enter, and to perform or endure many things in themselves toilsome and unpleasing, because we know by reason or by experience that our labour will be overbalanced by the reward, that it will either procure some positive good or avert some evil greater than itself.

But as the soul advances to a fuller exercise of its powers, the animal appetites and the passions

immediately arising from them are not sufficient to find it employment; the wants of nature are soon supplied, the fears of their return is easily precluded, and something more is necessary to relieve the long intervals of inactivity, and to give those faculties, which cannot lie wholly quiescent, some particular direction. For this reason, new desires and artificial passions are by degrees produced; and, from having wishes only in consequence of our wants, we begin to feel wants in consequence of our wishes; we persuade ourselves to set a value upon things which are of no use, but because we have agreed to value them; things which can neither satisfy hunger nor mitigate pain, nor secure us from any real calamity, and which, therefore, we find of no esteem among those nations whose artless and barbarous manners keep them always anxious for the necessaries of life.

This is the original of avarice, vanity, ambition, and generally of all those desires which arise from the comparison of our condition with that of others. He that thinks himself poor because his neighbour is richer; he that, like Cæsar, would rather be the first man of a village than the second in the capital of the world, has apparently kindled in himself desires which he never received from nature, and acts upon principles established only by the authority of custom.

Of those adscititious passions, some, as avarice and envy, are universally condemned: some, as friendship and curiosity, generally praised; but there are others about which the suffrages of the wise are divided, and of which it is doubted whether they tend most to promote the happiness or increase the miseries of mankind.

Of this ambiguous and disputable kind is the love of fame, a desire of filling the minds of others with admiration, and of being celebrated by generations to come with praises which we shall not hear. This

ardour has been considered by some as nothing better than splendid madness, as a flame kindled by pride and fanned by folly: for what, say they, can be more remote from wisdom than to direct all our actions by the hope of that which is not to exist till we ourselves are in the grave? To pant after that which can never be possessed, and of which the value thus widely put upon it arises from this particular condition, that, during life, it is not to be obtained? To gain the favour and hear the applauses of our contemporaries is indeed equally desirable with any other prerogative of superiority, because fame may be of use to smoothe the paths of life, to terrify opposition, and fortify tranquillity; but to what end shall we be the darlings of mankind when we can no longer receive any benefits from their favour? It is more reasonable to wish for reputation while it may yet be enjoyed, as Anacreon calls upon his companions to give him for present use the wine and garlands which they purpose to bestow upon his tomb.

The advocates for the love of fame allege in its vindication that it is a passion natural and universal; a flame lighted by Heaven, and always burning with greatest vigour in the most enlarged and elevated minds. That the desire of being praised by posterity implies a resolution to deserve their praises, and that the folly charged upon it is only a noble and disinterested generosity, which is not felt, and therefore not understood, by those who have been always accustomed to refer everything to themselves, and whose selfishness has contracted their understandings. That the soul of man, formed for eternal life, naturally springs forward beyond the limits of corporeal existence, and rejoices to consider herself as co-operating with future ages, and as co-extended with endless duration. That the reproach urged with so much petulance, the reproach of labouring for what cannot be enjoyed, is

founded on an opinion which may with great probability be doubted ; for since we suppose the powers of the soul to be enlarged by its separation, why should we conclude that its knowledge of sublunary transactions is contracted or extinguished.

Upon an attentive and impartial review of the argument, it will appear that the love of fame is to be regulated rather than extinguished ; and that men should be taught not to be wholly careless about their memory, but to endeavour that they may be remembered chiefly for their virtues, since no other reputation will be able to transmit any pleasure beyond the grave.

It is evident that fame, considered merely as the immortality of a name, is not less likely to be the reward of bad actions than of good ; he therefore has no certain principle for the regulation of his conduct whose single aim is not to be forgotten. And history will inform us, that this blind and undistinguishing appetite of renown has always been uncertain in its effects, and directed by accident or opportunity, indifferently to the benefit or devastation of the world. When Themistocles complained that the trophies of Miltiades hindered him from sleep, he was animated by them to perform the same services in the same cause. But Cæsar, when he wept at the sight of Alexander's picture, having no honest opportunity of action, let his ambition break out to the ruin of his country.

If, therefore, the love of fame is so far indulged by the mind as to become independent and predominant, it is dangerous and irregular ; but it may be usefully employed as an inferior and secondary motive, and will serve sometimes to revive our activity when we begin to languish and lose sight of that more certain, more valuable, and more durable reward, which ought always to be our first hope and our last. But it must be strongly impressed upon our minds that virtue is not to be pursued

as one of the means to fame, but fame to be accepted as the only recompense which mortals can bestow on virtue; to be accepted with complacency, but not sought with eagerness. Simply to be remembered is no advantage; it is a privilege which satire as well as panegyric can confer, and is not more enjoyed by Titus or Constantine than by Timocreon of Rhodes, of whom we only know from his epitaph *that he had eaten many a meal, drank many a flagon, and uttered many a reproach.*

The true satisfaction which is to be drawn from the consciousness that we shall share the attention of future times, must arise from the hope that, with our name, our virtues will be propagated; and that those whom we cannot benefit in our lives may receive instruction from our examples and incitement from our renown.

OLD AGE, TO BE RESPECTED, MUST BE VIRTUOUS.

“And had not men the hoary head revered,
And boys paid reverence when a man appeared,
Both must have died, though richer skins they wore,
And saw more heaps of acorns in their store.”

JUV.—CREECH'S *Trans.*

I HAVE always thought it the business of those who turn their speculations upon the living world, to commend the virtues as well as to expose the faults of their contemporaries, and to confute a false as well as to support a just accusation; not only because it is peculiarly the business of a monitor to keep his own reputation untainted, lest those who can once charge him with partiality should indulge themselves afterward in disbelieving him at pleasure, but because he may find real crimes suf-

ficient to give full employment to caution or repentance, without distracting the mind by needless scruples and vain solicitudes.

There are certain fixed and stated reproaches that one part of mankind has in all ages thrown upon another, which are regularly transmitted through continued successions, and which he that has once suffered them is certain to use with the same undistinguishing vehemence, when he has changed his station and gained the prescriptive right of inflicting on others what he had formerly endured himself. •

To these hereditary imputations, of which no man sees the justice, till it becomes his interest to see it, very little regard is to be shown; since it does not appear that they are produced by ratiocination or inquiry, but received implicitly, or caught by a kind of instantaneous contagion, and supported rather by willingness to credit than ability to prove them.

It has been always the practice of those who are desirous to believe themselves made venerable by length of time, to censure the new-comers into life for want of respect to gray hairs and sage experience, for heady confidence in their own understandings, for hasty conclusions upon partial views, for disregard of counsels, which their fathers and grandsires are ready to afford them, and a rebellious impatience of that subordination to which youth is condemned by nature, as necessary to its security from evils into which it would otherwise be precipitated by the rashness of passion and the blindness of ignorance.

Every old man complains of the growing depravity of the world, of the petulance and insolence of the rising generation. He recounts the decency and regularity of former times, and celebrates the discipline and sobriety of the age in which his youth was passed; a happy age, which is now no more to

be expected, since confusion has broken in upon the world, and thrown down all the boundaries of civility and reverence.

It is not sufficiently considered how much he assumes who dares to claim the privilege of complaining; for, as every man has, in his own opinion, a full share of the miseries of life, he is inclined to consider as clamorous uneasiness as a proof of impatience rather than of affliction, and to ask, What merit has this man to show by which he has acquired a right to repine at the distributions of nature? Or why does he imagine that exemptions should be granted him from the general condition of man? We find ourselves excited rather to captiousness than pity, and, instead of being in haste to sooth his complaints by sympathy and tenderness, we inquire whether the pain be proportionate to the lamentation; and whether, supposing the affliction real, it is not the effect of vice and folly rather than calamity.

The querulousness and indignation which are observed so often to disfigure the last scene of life, naturally lead us to inquiries like these. For, surely it will be thought, at the first view of things, that if age be thus contemned and ridiculed, insulted and neglected, the crime must at least be equal on either part. They who have had opportunities of establishing their authority over minds ductile and unresisting; they who have been the protectors of helplessness and the instructors of ignorance, and who yet retain in their own hands the power of wealth and the dignity of command, must defeat their influence by their own misconduct, and make use of all these advantages with very little skill, if they cannot secure to themselves an appearance of respect, and ward off open mockery and declared contempt.

The general story of mankind will evince that lawful and settled authority is very seldom resisted

when it is well employed. Gross corruption or evident imbecility is necessary to the suppression of that reverence with which the majority of mankind look upon their governors; on those whom they see surrounded by splendour and fortified by power. For though men are drawn by their passions into forgetfulness of invisible rewards and punishments, yet they are easily kept obedient to those who have temporal dominion in their hands, till their veneration is dissipated by such wickedness and folly as can neither be defended nor concealed.

It may, therefore, very reasonably be suspected that the old draw upon themselves the greatest part of those insults which they so much lament, and that age is rarely despised but when it is contemptible. If men imagine that excess of debauchery can be made reverend by time; that knowledge is the consequence of long life, however idly and thoughtlessly employed; that priority of birth will supply the want of steadiness or honesty, can it raise much wonder that their hopes are disappointed, and that they see their posterity rather willing to trust their own eyes in their progress into life, than enlist themselves under guides who have lost their way?

There are, indeed, many truths which time necessarily and certainly teaches, and which might, by those who have learned them from experience, be communicated to their successors at a cheaper rate; but dictates, though liberally enough bestowed, are generally without effect; the teacher gains few proselytes by instruction which his own behaviour contradicts; and young men miss the benefit of counsel, because they are not very ready to believe that those who fall below them in practice can much excel them in theory. Thus the progress of knowledge is retarded, the world is kept long in the same state. and every new race is to

gain the prudence of their predecessors by committing and redressing the same miscarriages.

To secure to the old that influence which they are willing to claim, and which might so much contribute to the improvement of the arts of life, it is absolutely necessary that they give themselves up to the duties of declining years, and contentedly resign to youth its levity, its pleasures, its frolics, and its fopperies. It is a hopeless endeavour to unite the contrarieties of spring and winter; it is unjust to claim the privileges of age, and retain the playthings of childhood. The young always form magnificent ideas of the wisdom and gravity of men whom they consider as placed at a distance from them in the ranks of existence, and naturally look on those whom they find trifling with long beards with contempt and indignation, like that which women feel at the effeminacy of men. If dotards will contend with boys in those performances in which boys must always excel them; if they will dress crippled limbs in embroidery, endeavour at gayety with faltering voices, and darken assemblies of pleasure with the ghastliness of disease, they may well expect that those who find their diversions obstructed will hoot them away; and that, if they descend to competition with youth, they must bear the insolence of successful rivals.

"You've had your share of mirth, of meat and drink;
'Tis time to quit the scene—'tis time to think."

ELPHINSTON.

Another vice of age, by which the rising generation may be alienated from it, is severity and censoriousness, that gives no allowance to the failings of early life, that expects artfulness from childhood and constancy from youth, that is peremptory in every command and inexorable to every failure. There are many who live merely to hinder happiness, and whose descendants can only tell of

long life that it produces suspicion, malignity, peevishness, and persecution: and yet even these tyrants can talk of the ingratitude of the age, curse their heirs for impatience, and wonder that young men cannot take pleasure in their fathers' company.

He that would pass the latter part of life with honour and decency must, when he is young, consider that he shall one day be old; and remember, when he is old, that he has once been young. In youth he must lay up knowledge for his support, when his powers of acting shall forsake him; and in age forbear to animadvert with rigour on faults which experience only can correct.

THE OVER-BUSY HOUSEWIFE EXEMPLIFIED IN THE CHARACTER OF LADY BUSTLE.

"How foolish is the toil of trifling cares!"

MART.—ELPHINSTON'S *Trans.*

To the Rambler.

SIR,—As you appear to think no form of human life unworthy of your attention, I have resolved, after many struggles with idleness and diffidence, to give you some account of my entertainment in this sober season of universal retreat, and to describe to you the employments of those who look with contempt on the pleasures and diversions of polite life, and employ all their powers of censure and invective upon the uselessness, vanity, and folly of dress, visits, and conversation.

When a tiresome and vexatious journey of four days had brought me to the house where invita-

tion, regularly sent for seven years together, had at last induced me to pass the summer, I was surprised, after the civilities of my first reception, to find, instead of the leisure and tranquillity which a rural life always promises, and, if well conducted, might always afford, a confused wildness of care and a tumultuous hurry of diligence, by which every face was clouded and every motion agitated. The old lady, who was my father's relation, was, indeed, very full of the happiness which she received from my visit, and, according to the forms of obsolete breeding, insisted that I should recompense the long delay of my company with a promise not to leave her till winter. But, amid all her kindness and caresses, she very frequently turned her head aside, and whispered, with anxious earnestness, some order to her daughters, which never failed to send them out with unpolite precipitation. Sometimes her impatience would not suffer her to stay behind; she begged my pardon, she must leave for a moment; she went, and returned and sat down again, but was again disturbed by some new care, dismissed her daughters with the same trepidation, and followed them with the same countenance of business and solicitude.

However I was alarmed at this show of eagerness and disturbance, and however my curiosity was excited by such busy preparations as naturally promised some great event, I was yet too much a stranger to gratify myself with inquiries; but, finding none of the family in mourning, I pleased myself with imagining that I should rather see a wedding than a funeral.

At last we sat down to supper, when I was informed that one of the young ladies, after whom I thought myself obliged to inquire, was under a necessity of attending some affair that could not be neglected: soon afterward my relation began to talk of the regularity of her family, and the inconvenience

of London hours ; and at last let me know that they had purposed that night to go to bed sooner than was usual, because they were to rise early in the morning to make cheesecakes. This hint sent me to my chamber, to which I was accompanied by all the ladies, who begged me to excuse some large sieves of leaves and flowers that covered two thirds of the floor, for they intended to distil them when they were dry, and they had no other room that so conveniently received the rising sun.

The scent of the plants hindered me from rest, and therefore I rose early in the morning with a resolution to explore my new habitation. I stole, unperceived by my cousins, into the garden, where I found nothing either more great or elegant than in the number of acres cultivated for the market. Of the gardener I soon learned that his lady was the greatest manager in that part of the country, and that I was come hither at the time in which I might learn to make more pickles and conserves than could be seen at any other house a hundred miles round.

It was not long before her ladyship gave me sufficient opportunities of knowing her character, for she was too much pleased with her own accomplishments to conceal them, and took occasion, from some sweetmeats which she set next day upon the table, to discourse for two long hours upon robs and jellies ; laid down the best methods of conserving, reserving, and preserving all sorts of fruit ; told us with great contempt of the London lady in the neighbourhood, by whom these terms were very often confounded ; and hinted how much she should be ashamed to set before company at her own house sweetmeats of so dark a colour as she had often seen at Mistress Sprightly's.

It is, indeed, the great business of her life to watch the skillet on the fire, to see it simmer with the due degree of heat, and to snatch it off at the

moment of projection; and the employments to which she has bred her daughters are to turn rose-leaves in the shade, to pick out the seeds of currants with a quill, to gather fruit without bruising it, and to extract bean-flower water for the skin. Such are the tasks with which every day since I came hither has begun and ended, to which the early hours of life are sacrificed, and in which that time is passing away which never shall return.

But to reason or expostulate are hopeless attempts. The lady has settled her opinions, and maintains the dignity of her own performances with all the firmness of stupidity accustomed to be flattered. Her daughters, having never seen any house but their own, believe their mother's excellence on her own word. Her husband is a mere sportsman, who is pleased to see his table well furnished, and thinks the day sufficiently successful in which he brings home a leash of hares to be potted by his wife.

After a few days I pretended to want books, but my lady soon told me that none of her books would suit my taste; for her part, she never loved to see young women give their minds to such follies, by which they would only learn to use hard words; she bred up her daughters to understand a house, and whoever should marry them, if they knew anything of good cookery, would never repent it.

There are, however, some things in the culinary science too sublime for youthful intellects, mysteries into which they must not be initiated till the years of serious maturity, and which are referred to the day of marriage as the supreme qualification for connubial life. She makes an orange pudding, which is the envy of all the neighbourhood, and which she has hitherto found means of mixing and baking with such secrecy, that the ingredient to which it owes its flavour has never been discovered. She, indeed, conducts this great affair with all the

caution that human policy can suggest. It is never known beforehand when this pudding will be produced ; she takes the ingredients privately into her own closet, employs her maids and daughters in different parts of the house, orders the oven to be heated for a pie, and places the pudding in it with her own hands ; the mouth of the oven is then stoped, and all inquiries are vain.

The composition of the pudding she has, however, promised Clarinda, that if she pleases her in marriage, she shall be told without reserve. But the art of making English capers she has not yet persuaded herself to discover, but seems resolved that secret shall perish with her, as some alchemists have obstinately suppressed the art of transmuting metals.

I once ventured to lay my fingers on her book of receipts, which she left upon the table, having intelligence that a vessel of gooseberry wine had burst the hoops. But though the importance of the event sufficiently engrossed her care, to prevent any recollection of the danger to which her secrets were exposed, I was not able to make use of the golden moments ; for this treasure of hereditary knowledge was so well concealed by the manner of spelling used by her grandmother, her mother, and herself, that I was totally unable to understand it, and lost the opportunity of consulting the oracle for want of knowing the language in which its answers were returned.

It is, indeed, necessary, if I have any regard to her ladyship's esteem, that I should apply myself to some of these economical accomplishments ; for I overheard her, two days ago, warning her daughters, by my mournful example, against negligence of pastry and ignorance of carving ; for you saw, said she, that, with all her pretensions to knowledge, she turned the partridge the wrong way when she attempted to cut it, and, I believe, scarcely

knows the difference between *pasté raised* and *paste* in a dish.

The reason, Mr. Rambler, why I have laid Lady Bustle's character before you, is a desire to be informed whether, in your opinion, it is worthy of imitation, and whether I shall throw away the books which I have hitherto thought it my duty to read, for *the Lady's Closet Opened*, *the Complete Servant-maid*, and *the Court Cook*, and resign all curiosity after right and wrong, for the art of scalding damascenes without bursting them, and preserving the whiteness of pickled mushrooms.

Lady Bustle has, indeed, by this incessant application to fruits and flowers, contracted her cares into a narrow space, and set herself free from many perplexities with which other minds are disturbed. She has no curiosity after the events of a war or the fate of heroes in distress; she can hear, without the least emotion, the ravage of a fire or devastations of a storm; her neighbours grow rich or poor, come into the world or go out of it, without regard, while she is pressing the jelly-bag or airing the store-room; but I cannot perceive that she is more free from disquiets than those whose understandings take a wider range. Her marigolds, when they are almost cured, are often scattered by the wind, and the rain sometimes falls upon fruit when it ought to be gathered dry. While her artificial wines are fermenting, her whole life is restlessness and anxiety. Her sweetmeats are not always bright, and the maid sometimes forgets the just proportions of salt and pepper when venison is to be baked. Her conserves mould, her wines sour, and pickles mother; and, like all the rest of mankind, she is every day mortified with the defeat of her schemes and the disappointment of her hopes.

With regard to vice and virtue she seems a kind of neutral being. She has no crime but luxury, nor

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any virtue but chastity; she has no desire to be praised but for her cookery, nor wishes any ill to the rest of mankind, but that, whenever they aspire to a feast, their custards may be whevish and their piecrusts tough.

I am now very impatient to know whether I am to look on these ladies as the great patterns of our sex, and to consider conserves and pickles as the business of my life; whether the censures which I now suffer be just, and whether the brewers of wines and the distillers of washes have a right to look with insolence on the weakness of

CORNELIA.

THE AFFLICTIONS COMMON TO ALL MANKIND SHOULD INCLINE US TO BEAR MORE PATIENTLY OUR OWN.

“How oft in vain the son of Theseus said,
The stormy sorrows be with patience laid;
Nor are thy fortunes to be wept alone;
Weigh other's woes, and learn to bear thy own.”

OVID.—CATCOTT'S *Trans.*

AMONG the various methods of consolation to which the miseries inseparable from our present state have given occasion, it has been, as I have already remarked, recommended by some writers to put the sufferer in mind of heavier pressures and more excruciating calamities than those of which he has himself reason to complain.

This has, in all ages, been directed and practised; and, in conformity to this custom, Lipsius, the great modern master of the Stoic philosophy, has, in his celebrated treatise on *Steadiness of Mind*, enl avoured to fortify the breast against too much sensi-

bility of misfortune, by enumerating the evils which have in former ages fallen upon the world, the devastation of wide-extended regions, the sack of cities, and massacre of nations. And the common voice of the multitude, uninstructed by precept and unprejudiced by authority, which, in questions that relate to the heart of man, is, in my opinion, more decisive than the learning of Lipsius, seems to justify the efficacy of this procedure ; for one of the first comforts which one neighbour administers to another is a relation of the like infelicity, combined with circumstances of greater bitterness.

But this medicine of the mind is like many remedies applied to the body, of which, though we see the effects, we are unacquainted with the manner of operation, and of which, therefore, some, who are unwilling to suppose anything out of the reach of their own sagacity, have been inclined to doubt whether they have really those virtues for which they are celebrated, and whether their reputation is not the mere gift of fancy, prejudice, and credulity.

Consolation or comfort are words which, in their proper acceptation, signify some alleviation of that pain to which it is not in our power to afford the proper and adequate remedy ; they imply rather an augmentation of the power of bearing than a diminution of the burden. A prisoner is relieved by him that sets him at liberty, but receives comfort from such as suggest considerations by which he is made patient under the inconvenience of confinement. To that grief which arises from a great loss, he only brings the true remedy who makes his friend's condition the same as before ; but he may be properly termed a comforter who by persuasion extenuates the pain of poverty, and shows, in the style of *Hesiod*, that *half is more than the whole*.

It is, perhaps, not immediately obvious, how it can lull the memory of misfortune, or appease the

throbbings of anguish, to hear that others are more miserable ; others, perhaps, unknown or wholly indifferent, whose prosperity raises to envy, and whose fall can gratify no resentment. Some topics of comfort arising, like that which gave hope and spirit to the captive of Sesostris, from the perpetual vicissitudes of life, and mutability of human affairs, may as properly raise the dejected as depress the proud, and have an immediate tendency to exhilarate and revive. But how can it avail the man who languishes in the gloom of sorrow, without prospect of emerging into the sunshine of cheerfulness, to hear that others are sunk yet deeper in the dungeon of misery, shackled with heavier chains, and surrounded with darker desperation ?

The solace arising from this consideration seems indeed the weakest of all others, and is, perhaps, never properly applied but in cases where there is no place for reflections of more speedy and pleasing efficacy. But even from such calamities life is by no means free ; a thousand ills incurable, a thousand losses irreparable, a thousand difficulties insurmountable, are known, or will be known, by all the sons of men. Native deformity cannot be rectified, a dead friend cannot return, and the hours of youth, trifled away in folly or lost in sickness, cannot be restored.

Under the oppression of such melancholy it has been found useful to take a survey of the world, to contemplate the various scenes of distress in which mankind are struggling round us, and acquaint ourselves with the *terribiles visu formæ*, the various shapes of misery which make havoc of terrestrial happiness, range all corners almost without restraint, trample down our hopes at the hour of harvest, and, when we have built our schemes to the top, ruin their foundations.

The first effect of this meditation is, that it furnishes a new employment for the mind, and en-

gages the passions on remoter objects; as kings have sometimes freed themselves from a subject too haughty to be governed and too powerful to be crushed, by posting him in a distant province till his popularity has subsided or his pride been repressed. The attention is dissipated by variety, and acts more weakly upon any single part, as that torrent may be drawn off to different channels, which, pouring down in one collected body, cannot be resisted. This species of comfort is therefore, unavailing in severe paroxysms of corporeal pain, when the mind is every instant called back to misery, and in the first shock of any sudden evil; but will certainly be of use against encroaching melancholy and a settled habit of gloomy thoughts.

It is farther advantageous, as it supplies us with opportunities of making comparisons in our own favour. We know that very little of the pain or pleasure which does not begin and end in our senses is otherwise than relative; we are rich or poor, great or little, in proportion to the number that excel us or fall beneath us in any of these respects; and, therefore, a man whose uneasiness arises from reflection on any misfortune that throws him below those with whom he was once equal, is comforted by finding that he is not yet the lowest.

There is another kind of comparison, less tending towards the vice of envy, very well illustrated by an old poet,* whose system will not afford many reasonable motives to content. "It is," says he, "pleasing to look from shore upon the tumults of a storm, and to see a ship struggling with the billows; it is pleasing, not because the pain of another can give us delight, but because we have a stronger impression of the happiness of safety." Thus, when we look abroad, and behold the multitudes that are groaning under evils heavier than those

* Lucretius.

which we have experienced, we shrink back to our own state, and, instead of repining that so much must be felt, learn to rejoice that we have not more to feel.

By this observation of the miseries of others, fortitude is strengthened, and the mind brought to a more extensive knowledge of her own powers. As the heroes of action catch the flame from one to another, so they to whom Providence has allotted the harder task of suffering with calmness and dignity, may animate themselves by the remembrance of those evils which have been laid on others, perhaps naturally as weak as themselves, and bear up with vigour and resolution against their own oppressions when they see it possible that more severe afflictions may be borne.

There is still another reason why, to many minds, the relation of other men's infelicity may give a lasting and continual relief. Some, not well instructed in the measures by which Providence distributes happiness, are perhaps misled by divines, who, as Bellarmine makes temporal prosperity one of the characters of the true church, have represented wealth and ease as the certain concomitants of virtue and the unfailing result of the Divine approbation. Such sufferers are dejected in their misfortunes, not so much for what they feel as for what they dread; not because they cannot support the sorrows or endure the wants of their present condition, but because they consider them as only the beginnings of more sharp and more lasting pains. To these mourners it is an act of the highest charity to represent the calamities which not only virtue has suffered, but virtue has incurred; to inform them that one evidence of a future state is the uncertainty of any present reward for goodness; and to remind them, from the highest authority, of the distresses and penury of men of whom the world was not worthy.

FOLLY OF PRODIGALITY.

“Husband thy possessions.”

THERE is scarcely among the evils of human life any so generally dreaded as poverty. Every other species of misery, those who are not much accustomed to disturb the present moment with reflection can easily forget, because it is not always forced upon their regard; but it is impossible to pass a day or an hour in the confluxes of men, without seeing how much indigence is exposed to contumely, neglect, and insult; and, in its lowest state, to hunger and nakedness; to injuries against which every passion is in arms, and to wants which nature cannot sustain.

Among other evils, the heart is often hardened by true or by false notions of dignity and reputation; thus we see dangers of every kind faced with willingness, because bravery in a good or bad cause is never without its encomiasts and admirers. But in the prospect of poverty there is nothing but gloom and melancholy; the mind and body suffer together, its miseries bring no alleviations; it is a state in which every virtue is obscured, and in which no conduct can avoid reproach; a state in which cheerfulness is insensibility, and dejection sullenness; of which the hardships are without honour, and the labours without reward.

Of these calamities there seems not to be wanting a general conviction; we hear on every side the noise of trade, and see the streets thronged with numberless multitudes, whose faces are clouded with anxiety, and whose steps are hurried by precipitation, from no other motive than the hope of gain; and the whole world is put in motion by the

desire of that wealth which is chiefly to be valued as it secures us from poverty ; for it is more useful for defence than acquisition, and is not so much able to procure good as to exclude evil.

Yet there are always some whose passions or follies lead them to a conduct opposite to the general maxims and practice of mankind ; some who seem to rush upon poverty with the same eagerness with which others avoid it ; who see their revenues hourly lessened, and the estates which they inherit from their ancestors mouldering away, without resolution to change their course of life ; who persevere against all remonstrances, and go forward with full career, though they see before them the precipice of destruction.

It is not my purpose in this paper to expostulate with such as ruin their fortunes by expensive schemes of buildings and gardens, which they carry on with the same vanity that prompted them to begin, choosing, as it happens in a thousand other cases, the remote evil before the lighter, and deferring the shame of repentance till they incur the miseries of distress. Those for whom I intend my present admonitions are the thoughtless, the negligent, and the dissolute, who, having, by the viciousness of their own inclinations or the seducements of alluring companions, been engaged in habits of expense, and accustomed to move in a certain round of pleasures disproportioned to their condition, are without power to extricate themselves from the enchantments of customs, avoid the thought because they know it will be painful, and continue from day to day, and from month to month, to anticipate their revenues, and sink every hour deeper into the gulfs of usury and extortion.

This folly has less claim to pity, because it cannot be imputed to the vehemence of sudden passion ; nor can the mischief which it produces be extenuated as the effect of any single act, which

rage or desire might execute before there could be time for an appeal to reason. These men are advancing towards misery by soft approaches, and destroying themselves, not by the violence of a blow, which, when once given, can never be recalled, but by a slow poison, hourly repeated and obstinately continued.

This conduct is so absurd when it is examined by the unprejudiced eye of rational judgment, that nothing but experience could evince its possibility; yet, absurd as it is, the sudden fall of some families, and the sudden rise of others, prove it to be common; and every year sees many wretches reduced to contempt and want by their costly sacrifices to pleasure and vanity.

It is the fate of almost every passion, when it has passed the bounds which nature prescribes, to counteract its own purpose. Too much rage hinders the warrior from circumspection, too much eagerness of profit hurts the credit of the trade, too much ardour takes away from the lover that easiness of address with which ladies are delighted. Thus extravagance, though dictated by vanity and incited by voluptuousness, seldom procures ultimately either applause or pleasure.

If praise be justly estimated by the character of those from whom it is received, little satisfaction will be given to the spendthrift by the encomiums which he purchases. For who are they that animate him in his pursuits but young men, thoughtless and abandoned like himself, unacquainted with all on which the wisdom of nations has impressed the stamp of excellence, and devoid alike of knowledge and of virtue! By whom is his profusion praised but by wretches who consider him as subservient to their purposes, sirens that entice him to shipwreck, and Cyclops that are gaping to devour him?

Every man whose knowledge or whose virtue

can give value to his opinion, looks with scorn or pity, neither of which can afford much gratification to pride, on him whom the panders of luxury have drawn into the circle of their influence, and whom he sees parcelled out among the different ministers of folly, and about to be torn to pieces by tailors and jockeys, vintners and attorneys, who at once rob and ridicule him, and who are secretly triumphing over his weakness, when they present new incitements to his appetite, and heighten his desires by counterfeited applause.

Such is the praise that is purchased by prodigality. Even when it is yet not discovered to be false, it is the praise only of those whom it is reproachful to please, and whose sincerity is corrupted by their interest; men who live by the riots which they encourage, and who know that, whenever their pupil grows wise, they shall lose their power. Yet with such flatteries, if they could last, might the cravings of vanity, which is seldom very delicate, be satisfied; but the time is always hastening forward when this triumph, poor as it is, shall vanish, and when those who now surround him with obsequiousness and compliments, fawn among his equipage and animate his riots, shall turn upon him with insolence, and reproach him with the vices promoted by themselves.

And as little pretensions has the man who squanders his estate, by vain or vicious expenses, to greater degrees of pleasure than are obtained by others. To make any happiness sincere, it is necessary that we believe it to be lasting; since whatever we suppose ourselves in danger of losing must be enjoyed with solicitude and uneasiness, and the more value we set upon it, the more must the present possession be embittered. How can he, then, be envied for his felicity, who knows that its continuance cannot be expected, and who is conscious that a very short time will give him up to the gripe of

poverty, which will be harder to be borne as he has given way to more excesses, wantoned in greater abundance, and indulged his appetites with more profuseness!

It appears evident that frugality is necessary even to complete the pleasure of expense; for it may be generally remarked of those who squander what they know their fortune not sufficient to allow, that in their most jovial expense there always breaks out some proof of discontent and impatience; they either scatter with a kind of wild desperation and affected lavishness, as criminals brave the gallows when they cannot escape it, or pay their money with a peevish anxiety, and endeavour at once to spend idly and to save meanly: having neither firmness to deny their passions, nor courage to gratify them, they murmur at their own enjoyments, and poison the bowl of pleasure by reflection on the cost.

Among these men there is often the vociferation of merriment, but very seldom the tranquillity of cheerfulness; they inflame their imaginations to a kind of momentary jollity by the help of wine and riot, and consider it as the first business of the night to stupify recollection, and lay that reason asleep which disturbs their gayety and calls upon them to retreat from ruin.

But this poor, broken satisfaction is of short continuance, and must be expiated by a long series of misery and regret. In a short time the creditor grows impatient, the last acre is sold, the passions and appetites still continue their tyranny, with incessant calls for their usual gratifications, and the remainder of life passes away in vain repentance or impotent desire.

Frugality, indeed, is so necessary to the happiness of the world, so beneficial in its various forms to every rank of men, from the highest of human potentates to the lowest labourer or artificer; and

- the miseries which the neglect of it produces are so numerous and so grievous, that it ought to be recommended with every variation of address, and adapted to every class of understanding.

Whether those who treat morals as a science will allow frugality to be numbered among the virtues, I have not thought it necessary to inquire. For I, who draw my opinions from a careful observation of the world, am satisfied with knowing what is abundantly sufficient for practice, that if it be not a virtue, it is at least a quality which can seldom exist without some virtues, and without which few virtues can exist. Frugality may be termed the daughter of Prudence, the sister of Temperance, and the parent of Liberty. He that is extravagant will quickly become poor, and poverty will enforce dependance and invite corruption; it will almost always produce a passive compliance with the wickedness of others; and there are few who do not learn by degrees to practise those crimes which they cease to censure.

If there are any who do not dread poverty as dangerous to virtue, yet mankind seem unanimous enough in abhorring it as destructive to happiness; and all to whom want is terrible, upon whatever principle, ought to think themselves obliged to learn the sage maxims of our parsimonious ancestors, and attain the salutary arts of contracting expense; for without frugality none can be rich, and with it very few would be poor.

To most other acts of virtue or exertions of wisdom, a concurrence of many circumstances is necessary, some previous knowledge must be attained, some uncommon gifts of nature possessed, or some opportunity produced by an extraordinary combination of things; but the mere power of saving what is already in our hands must be easy of acquisition to every mind; and as the example of Bacon may show that the highest intellect cannot safely

neglect it, a thousand instances will every day prove that the meanest may practise it with success.

Riches cannot be within the reach of great numbers, because to be rich is to possess more than is commonly placed in a single hand; and, if many could obtain the sum which now makes a man wealthy, the name of wealth must then be transferred to still greater accumulations. But I am not certain that it is equally impossible to exempt the lower classes of mankind from poverty; because, though whatever be the wealth of the community, some will always have least, and he that has less than any other is comparatively poor; yet I do not see any coactive necessity that many should be without the indispensable conveniences of life; but am sometimes inclined to imagine that, casual calamities excepted, there might, by universal prudence, be procured a universal exemption from want; and that he who should happen to have least might, notwithstanding, have enough.

But, without entering too far into speculations which I do not remember that any political calculator has attempted, and in which the most perspicacious reasoners may be easily bewildered, it is evident that they to whom Providence has allotted no other care but of their own fortune and their own virtue, which make far the greater part of mankind, have sufficient incitements to personal frugality, since, whatever might be its general effect upon provinces or nations, by which it is never likely to be tried, we know with certainty that there is scarcely any individual entering the world who, by prudent parsimony, may not reasonably promise himself a cheerful competence in the decline of life.

The prospect of penury in age is so gloomy and terrifying, that every man who looks before him must resolve to avoid it; and it must be avoided generally by the science of sparing. For, though

in every age there are some who, by bold adventures, or by favourable accidents, rise suddenly to riches, yet it is dangerous to indulge hopes of such rare events: and the bulk of mankind must owe their affluence to small and gradual profits, below which their expense must be resolutely reduced.

The reader must not, therefore, think me sinking below the dignity of a practical philosopher when I recommend to the consideration of all, from the statesman to the apprentice, a position replete with mercantile wisdom, *A penny saved is twopence got*; which may, I think, be accommodated to all conditions, by observing not only that they who pursue any lucrative employment will save time when they forbear expense, and that the time may be employed to the increase of profit; but that they who are above such minute considerations will find, by every victory over appetite or passion, new strength added to the mind, will gain the power of refusing those solicitations by which the young and vivacious are hourly assaulted, and in time set themselves above the reach of extravagance and folly.

It may, perhaps, be inquired by those who are willing rather to cavil than to learn, what is the just measure of frugality; and when expense, not absolutely necessary, degenerates into profusion. To such questions no general answer can be returned; since the liberty of spending or necessity of parsimony may be varied without end by different circumstances. It may, however, be laid down as a rule never to be broken, that *a man's voluntary expense should not exceed his revenue*. A maxim so obvious and incontrovertible, that the civil law ranks the prodigal with the madman, and debars them equally from the conduct of their own affairs. Another precept arising from the former, and indeed included in it, is yet necessary to be distinctly impressed upon the warm, the fanciful, and the brave: *Let no man anticipate uncertain profits. Let no man*

presume to spend upon hopes, to trust his own abilities for means of deliverance from penury, to give a loose to his present desires, and leave the reckoning to fortune or to virtue.

To these cautions, which I suppose are, at least among the graver part of mankind, undisputed, I will add another, *Let no man squander against his inclination.* With this precept it may be, perhaps, imagined easy to comply; yet if those whom profusion has buried in prisons or driven into banishment were examined, it would be found that very few were ruined by their own choice, or purchased pleasure with the loss of their estates; but that they suffered themselves to be borne away by the violence of those with whom they conversed, and yielded reluctantly to a thousand prodigalities, either from a trivial emulation of wealth and spirit, or a mean fear of contempt and ridicule; an emulation for the prize of folly, or the dread of the laugh of fools.

THE CHAMBER OF A DYING FRIEND THE BEST SCHOOL OF WISDOM.

“Day presses on the heels of day,
And moons increase to their decay;
But you, with thoughtless pride elate,
Unconscious of impending fate,
Command the pillar’d dome to rise,
When lo! thy tomb forgotten lies.”

HOR.—FRANCIS’S *Trans.*

I HAVE lately been called, from a mingled life of business and amusement, to attend the last hours of an old friend; an office which has filled me, if not with melancholy, at least with serious reflec-

tions, and turned my thoughts towards the contemplation of those subjects which, though of the utmost importance and of indubitable certainty, are generally secluded from our regard by the jollity of health, the hurry of employment, and even by the calmer diversions of study and speculation; or, if they become accidental topics of conversation and argument, yet rarely sink deep into the heart, but give occasion only to some subtleties of reasoning or elegances of declamation, which are heard, applauded, and forgotten.

It is, indeed, not hard to conceive how a man, accustomed to extend his views through a long concatenation of causes and effects, to trace things from their origin to their period, and compare means with ends, may discover the weakness of human schemes; detect the fallacies by which mortals are deluded; show the insufficiency of wealth, honours, and power to real happiness; and please himself and his auditors with learned lectures on the vanity of life.

But, though the speculatist may see and show the folly of terrestrial hopes, fears, and desires, every hour will give proofs that he never felt it. Trace him through the day or year, and you will find him acting upon principles which he has in common with the illiterate and unenlightened; angry and pleased, like the lowest of the vulgar; pursuing with the same ardour the same designs; grasping, with all the eagerness of transport, those riches which he knows he cannot keep, and swelling with the applause which he has gained by proving that applause is of no value.

The only conviction that rushes upon the soul, and takes away from our appetites and passions the power of resistance, is to be found, where I have received it, at the bed of a dying friend. To enter this school of wisdom is not the peculiar privilege of geometers; the most sublime and important precepts require no uncommon opportunities nor la-

borious preparations ; they are enforced without the aid of eloquence, and understood without skill in analytic science. Every tongue can utter them, and every understanding can conceive them. He that wishes in earnest to obtain just sentiments concerning his condition, and would be intimately acquainted with the world, may find instructions on every side. He that desires to enter behind the scene, which every art has been employed to decorate, and every passion labours to illuminate, and wishes to see life stripped of those ornaments which make it glitter on the stage, and exposed in its natural meanness, impotence, and nakedness, may find all the delusion laid open in the chamber of disease ; he will there find vanity divested of her robes, power deprived of her sceptre, and hypocrisy without her mask.

The friend whom I have lost was a man eminent for genius, and, like others of the same class, sufficiently pleased with acceptance and applause. Being caressed by those who have preferments and riches at their disposal, he considered himself as in the direct road to advancement, and had caught the flame of ambition by approaches to its object. But, in the midst of his hopes, his projects, and his gayeties, he was seized by a lingering disease, which, from its first stage, he knew to be incurable. Here was an end of all his visions of greatness and happiness ; from the first hour that his health declined all his former pleasures grew tasteless. His friends expected to please him by those accounts of the growth of his reputation, which were formerly certain of being well received ; but they soon found how little he was now affected by compliments, and how vainly they attempted, by flattery, to exhilarate the languor of weakness and relieve the solicitude of approaching death. Whoever would know how much piety and virtue surpass all external goods, might here have seen them weighed

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against each other, where all that gives motion to the active and elevation to the eminent, all that sparkles in the eye of hope and pants in the bosom of suspicion, at once became dust in the balance, without weight and without regard. Riches, authority, and praise lose all their influence when they are considered as riches which to-morrow shall be bestowed upon another, authority which shall this night expire for ever, and praise which, however merited or however sincere, shall, after a few moments, be heard no more.

In those hours of seriousness and wisdom, nothing appeared to raise his spirits or gladden his heart but the recollection of acts of goodness, nor to excite his attention but some opportunity for the exercise of the duties of religion. Everything that terminated on this side of the grave was received with coldness and indifference, and regarded rather in consequence of the habit of valuing it than from any opinion that it deserved value; it had little more prevalence over his mind than a bubble that was now broken, a dream from which he was awake. His whole powers were engrossed by the consideration of another state, and all conversation was tedious that had not some tendency to disengage him from human affairs, and open his prospects into futurity.

It is now passed; we have closed his eyes, and heard him breathe the groan of expiration. At the sight of this last conflict I felt a sensation never known to me before; a confusion of passions, an awful stillness of sorrow, a gloomy terror without a name. The thoughts that entered my soul were too strong to be diverted, and too piercing to be endured; but such violence cannot be lasting; the storm subsided in a short time; I wept, retired, and grew calm.

I have from that time frequently revolved in my mind the effects which the observation of death

produces in those who are not wholly without the power and use of reflection; for by far the greater part it is wholly unregarded. Their friends and their enemies sink into the grave without raising any uncommon emotion, or reminding them that they are themselves on the edge of the precipice, and that they must soon plunge into the gulf of eternity.

It seems to me remarkable, that death increases our veneration for the good and extenuates our hatred of the bad. Those virtues which once we envied, as Horace observes, because they eclipsed our own, can now no longer obstruct our reputation, and we have therefore no interest to suppress their praise. That wickedness, which we feared for its malignity, is now become impotent; and the man, whose name filled us with alarm, and rage, and indignation, can at last be considered only with pity or contempt.

When a friend is carried to his grave, we at once find excuses for every weakness and palliations of every fault; we recollect a thousand endearments, which before glided off our minds without impression; a thousand favours unrepaid, a thousand duties unperformed, and wish, vainly wish, for his return, not so much that we may receive, as that we may bestow happiness, and recompense that kindness which before we never understood.

There is not, perhaps, to a mind well instructed, a more painful occurrence than the death of one whom we have injured without reparation. Our crime seems now irretrievable; it is indelibly recorded, and the stamp of fate is fixed upon it. We consider, with the most afflictive anguish, the pain which we have given, and now cannot alleviate, and the losses which we have caused and now cannot repair.

Of the same kind are the emotions which the death of an emulator or competitor produces. Who-

ever had qualities to alarm our jealousy, had excellence to deserve our fondness; and to whatever ardour of opposition interest may inflame us, no man ever outlived an enemy whom he did not then wish to have made a friend. Those who are versed in literary history know that the elder Scaliger was the redoubted antagonist of Cardan and Erasmus; yet at the death of each of his great rivals he relented, and complained that they were snatched away from him before their reconciliation was completed.

“Art thou too fallen? ere anger could subside
And love return, has great *Erasmus* died?”

Such are the sentiments with which we finally review the effects of passion, but which we sometimes delay till we can no longer rectify our errors. Let us therefore make haste to do what we shall certainly at last wish to have done; let us return the caresses of our friends, and endeavour, by mutual endearments, to heighten that tenderness which is the balm of life. Let us be quick to repent of injuries while repentance may not be a barren anguish, and let us open our eyes to every rival excellence, and pay early and willingly those honours which justice will compel us to pay at last.

THE TRUE VALUE AND USE OF RICHES.

“But while in heaps his wicked wealth ascends,
He is not of his wish possess’d;
There’s something wanting still to make him bless’d.”
HOM.—FRANCIS’S *Trans.*

As the love of money has been in all ages one of the passions that have given great disturbance to

the tranquillity of the world, there is no topic more copiously treated by the ancient moralists than the folly of devoting the heart to the accumulation of riches. They who are acquainted with these authors need not be told how riches excite pity, contempt, or reproach whenever they are mentioned; with what numbers of examples the dangers of large possessions is illustrated; and how all the powers of reason and eloquence have been exhausted in endeavours to eradicate a desire, which seems to have intrenched itself too strongly in the mind to be driven out, and which, perhaps, had not lost its power even over those who declaimed against it, but would have broken out in the poet or the sage if it had been excited by opportunity and invigorated by the approximation of its proper object.

Their arguments have been, indeed, so unsuccessful, that I know not whether it can be shown that, by all the wit and reason which this favourite cause has called forth, a convert was ever made; that even one man has refused to be rich, when to be rich was in his power, from the conviction of the greater happiness of a narrow fortune; or disburdened himself of wealth when he had tried its inquietudes, merely to enjoy the peace, and leisure, and security of a mean and unenvied state.

It is true, indeed, that many have neglected opportunities of raising themselves to honours and to wealth, and rejected the kindest offers of fortune; but, however their moderation may be boasted by themselves, or admired by such as only view them at a distance, it will be, perhaps, seldom found that they value riches less, but that they dread labour or danger more than others; they are unable to rouse themselves to action, to strain the race of competition, or to stand the shock of contest; but though they, therefore, decline the toil of climbing, they nevertheless wish themselves aloft, and would willingly enjoy what they dare not seize.

Others have retired from high stations, and voluntarily condemned themselves to privacy and obscurity. But even these will not afford many occasions of triumph to the philosopher; for they have commonly either quitted that only which they thought themselves unable to hold, and prevented disgrace by resignation, or they have been induced to try new measures by general inconstancy, which always dreams of happiness in novelty, or by a gloomy disposition, which is disgusted in the same degree with every state, and wishes every scene of life to change as soon as it is beheld. Such men found high and low stations equally unable to satisfy the wishes of a distempered mind, and were unable to shelter themselves in the closest retreat from disappointment, solicitude, and misery.

Yet, though these admonitions have been thus neglected by those who either enjoyed riches or were able to procure them, it is not rashly to be determined that they are altogether without use; for, since far the greatest part of mankind must be confined to conditions comparatively mean, and placed in situations from which they naturally look up with envy to the eminences before them, those writers cannot be thought ill employed that have administered remedies to discontent almost universal, by showing that what we cannot reach may very well be forborne; that the inequality of distribution at which we murmur is, for the most part, less than it seems; and that the greatness which we admire at a distance has much fewer advantages and much less splendour when we are suffered to approach it.

It is the business of moralists to detect the frauds of fortune, and to show that she imposes upon the careless eye by a quick succession of shadows, which will sink to nothing in the gripe; that she disguises life in extrinsic ornaments, which serve only for show, and are laid aside in the hours of solitude and of pleasure; and that, when greatness

aspires either to felicity or to wisdom, it shakes off those distinctions which dazzle the gazer and awe the suppliant.

It may be remarked, that they whose condition has not afforded them the light of moral or religious instruction, and who collect all their ideas by their own eyes and digest them by their own understandings, seem to consider those who are placed in ranks of remote superiority as almost another and higher species of beings. As themselves have known little other misery than the consequences of want, they are with difficulty persuaded that where there is wealth there can be sorrow, or that those who glitter in dignity and glide along in affluence can be acquainted with pains and cares like those which lie heavy upon the rest of mankind.

This prejudice is, indeed, confined to the lowest meanness and the darkest ignorance; but it is so confined only because others have been shown its folly and its falsehood, because it has been opposed in its progress by history and philosophy, and hindered from spreading its infection by powerful preservatives.

The doctrine of the contempt of wealth, though it has not been able to extinguish avarice or ambition, or suppress that reluctance with which a man passes his days in a state of inferiority, must at least have made the lower conditions less grating and wearisome, and has consequently contributed to the general security of life, by hindering that fraud and violence, rapine and circumvention, which must have been produced by an unbounded eagerness of wealth, arising from an unshaken conviction that to be rich is to be happy.

Whoever finds himself incited, by some violent impulse of passion, to pursue riches as the chief end of being, must surely be so much alarmed by the successive admonitions of those whose experience and sagacity have recommended them as the

guides of mankind, as to stop and consider whether he is about to engage in an undertaking that will reward his toil, and to examine, before he rushes to wealth through right and wrong, what it will confer when he has acquired it; and his examination will seldom fail to repress his ardour and retard his violence.

Wealth is nothing in itself; it is not useful but when it departs from us; its value is found only in that which it can purchase, which, if we suppose it put to its best use by those that possess it, seems not much to deserve the desire or envy of a wise man. It is certain that, with regard to corporeal enjoyment, money can neither open new avenues to pleasure nor block up the passages of anguish.

Disease and infirmity still continue to torture and enfeeble, perhaps exasperated by luxury or promoted by softness. With respect to the mind, it has rarely been observed that wealth contributes much to quicken the discernment, enlarge the capacity, or elevate the imagination; but may, by hiring flattery or laying diligence asleep, confirm error and harden stupidity.

Wealth cannot confer greatness, for nothing can make that great which the decree of nature has ordained to be little. The bramble may be placed in a hotbed, but can never become an oak. Even royalty itself is not able to give that dignity which it happens not to find, but oppresses feeble minds though it may elevate the strong. The world has been governed in the name of kings, whose existence has scarcely been perceived by any real effects beyond their own palaces.

When, therefore, the desire of wealth is taking hold of the heart, let us look round and see how it operates upon those whose industry or fortune has obtained it. When we find them oppressed with their own abundance, luxurious without pleasure, idle without ease, impatient and querulous in them-

selves, and despised or hated by the rest of mankind, we shall soon be convinced that, if the real wants of our condition are satisfied, there remains little to be sought with solicitude or desired with eagerness.

DESCRIPTION OF ONE WHO IS HABITUALLY ANTICIPATING EVIL.

“Complaining oft gives respite to our grief;
From hence the wretched Progne sought relief;
Hence the Pæantian chief his fate deplores,
And vents his sorrow to the Lemnian shores:
In vain by secrecy he would assuage
Our cares: conceal’d, they gather tenfold rage.”

OVID.—F. LEWIS’S *Trans.*

It is common to distinguish men by the names of animals which they are supposed to resemble. Thus a hero is frequently termed a lion, and a statesman a fox; an extortioner gains the appellation of vulture, and a fop the title of monkey. There is also among the various anomalies of character, which a survey of the world exhibits, a species of beings in human form, which may be properly marked out as the screech-owls of mankind.

These screech-owls seem to be settled in an opinion that the great business of life is to complain, and that they were born for no other purpose than to disturb the happiness of others; to lessen the little comforts and shorten the short pleasures of our condition by painful remembrances of the past, or melancholy prognostics of the future; their only care is to crush the rising hope, to damp the kindling transport, and allay the golden hours

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of gayety with the hateful dross of grief and suspicion.

To those whose weakness of spirits or timidity of temper subjects them to impressions from others, and who are apt to suffer by fascination, and catch the contagion of misery, it is extremely unhappy to live within the compass of a screech-owl's voice; for it will often fill their ears in the hour of dejection, terrify them with apprehensions which their own thoughts would never have produced, and sadden, by intruded sorrows, the day which might have been passed in amusements or in business; it will burden the heart with unnecessary discontents, and weaken for a time that love of life which is necessary to the vigorous prosecution of any undertaking.

Though I have, like the rest of mankind, many failings and weaknesses, I have not yet, by either friends or enemies, been charged with superstition; I never count the company which I enter, and I look at the new moon indifferently over either shoulder. I have, like most other philosophers, often heard the cuckoo without money in my pocket, and have been sometimes reproached as foolhardy for not turning down my eyes when a raven flew over my head. I never go home abruptly because a snake crosses my way, nor have any particular dread of a climacterical year: yet I confess that, with all my scorn of old women and their tales, I consider it as an unhappy day when I happen to be greeted in the morning by *Suspirius* the screech-owl.

I have now known *Suspirius* fifty-eight years and four months, and have never yet passed an hour with him in which he has not made some attack upon my quiet. When we were first acquainted, his great topic was the misery of youth without riches; and, whenever we walked out together, he solaced me with a long enumeration of pleasures

which, as they were beyond the reach of my fortune, were without the verge of my desires, and which I should never have considered as the objects of a wish, had not his unseasonable representations placed them in my sight.

Another of his topics is the neglect of merit, with which he never fails to amuse every man whom he sees not eminently fortunate. If he meets with a young officer, he always informs him of gentlemen whose personal courage is unquestioned, and whose military skill qualifies them to command armies, that have, notwithstanding all their merit, grown old with subaltern commissions. For a genius in the church, he is always provided with a curacy for life. The lawyer he informs of many men of great parts and deep study who have never had an opportunity to speak in the courts: and meeting Serenus the physician, "Ah, doctor," says he, "what, afoot still, when so many block-heads are rattling in their chariots? I told you seven years ago that you would never meet with encouragement, and I hope you will now take more notice when I tell you that your Greek, and your diligence, and your honesty will never enable you to live like yonder apothecary, who prescribes to his own shop and laughs at the physician."

Suspirius has, in his time, intercepted fifteen authors in their way to the stage; persuaded nine-and-thirty merchants to retire from a prosperous trade for fear of bankruptcy; broke off a hundred and thirteen matches by prognostications of unhappiness, and enabled the smallpox to kill nineteen ladies by perpetual alarms of the loss of beauty.

Whenever my evil stars bring us together, he never fails to represent to me the folly of my pursuits, and informs me that we are much older than when we begun our acquaintance: that the infirmities of decrepitude are coming fast upon me; that whatever I now get I shall enjoy but a little time;

that fame is to a man tottering on the edge of the grave of very little importance ; and that the time is at hand when I ought to look for no other pleasures than a good dinner and an easy chair.

Thus he goes on in his unharmonious strain, displaying present miseries and foreboding more ; every syllable is loaded with misfortune, and death is always brought nearer to the view. Yet, what always raises my resentment and indignation, I do not perceive that his mournful meditations have much effect upon himself. He talks and has long talked of calamities, without discovering otherwise than by the tone of his voice that he feels any of the evils which he bewails or threatens, but has the same habit of uttering lamentations as others of telling stories, and falls into expressions of condolence for past or apprehension of future mischiefs, as all men studious of their ease have recourse to those subjects upon which they can most fluently or copiously discourse.

It is reported of the Sybarites that they destroyed all their cocks, that they might dream out their morning dreams without disturbance. Though I would not so far promote effeminacy as to propose the Sybarites for an example, yet, since there is no man so corrupt or foolish but something useful may be learned from him, I could wish that, in imitation of a people not often to be copied, some regulations might be made to exclude screech-owls from all company, as the enemies of mankind, and confine them to some proper receptacle, where they may mingle sighs at leisure, and thicken the gloom of one another.

Thou prophet of evil, says Homer's Agamemnon, thou never foretellest me good, but the joy of thy heart is to predict misfortunes. Whoever is of the same temper might there find the means of indulging his thoughts and improving his vein of denunciation, and the flock of screech-owls might hoot together

without injury to the rest of the world. Yet, though I have so little kindness for this dark generation, I am very far from intending to debar the soft and tender mind from the privilege of complaining, when the sigh arises from the desire not of giving pain, but of gaining ease. To hear complaints with patience, even when complaints are vain, is one of the duties of friendship; and though it must be allowed that he suffers most like a hero that hides his grief in silence,

“His outward smiles conceal’d his inward smart.”

DRYDEN.

yet it cannot be denied, that he who complains acts like a man, like a social being, who looks for help from his fellow-creatures. Pity is to many of the unhappy a source of comfort in hopeless distress, as it contributes to recommend them to themselves by proving that they have not lost the regard of others; and Heaven seems to indicate the duty even of barren compassion by inclining us to weep for evils which we cannot remedy.

NO STUDY MORE INTERESTING OR USEFUL THAN BIOGRAPHY.

“Whose works the beautiful and base contain,
Of vice and virtue more instructive rules,
Than all the sober sages of the schools.”

HOR.—FRANCIS'S *Trans.*

ALL joy or sorrow for the happiness or calamities of others is produced by an act of the imagination, that realizes the event however fictitious, or approximates it however remote, by placing us, for a

time, in the condition of him whose fortune we contemplate ; so that we feel, while the deception lasts, whatever motions would be excited by the same good or evil happening to ourselves.

Our passions are therefore more strongly moved in proportion as we can more readily adopt the pains or pleasure proposed to our minds by recognising them as once our own, or considering them as naturally incident to our state of life. It is not easy for the most artful writer to give us an interest in happiness or misery which we think ourselves never likely to feel, and with which we have never yet been made acquainted. Histories of the downfall of kingdoms and revolutions of empires are read with great tranquillity : the imperial tragedy pleases common auditors only by its pomp of ornament and grandeur of ideas ; and the men whose faculties have been engrossed by business, and whose heart never fluttered but at the rise or fall of stocks, wonders how the attention can be seized or the affection agitated by a tale of love.

Those parallel circumstances and kindred images to which we readily conform our minds, are, above all other writings, to be found in narratives of the lives of particular persons ; and, therefore, no species of writing seems more worthy of cultivation than biography, since none can be more delightful or more useful, none can more certainly enchain the heart by irresistible interest, or more widely diffuse instruction to every diversity of condition.

The general and rapid narratives of history, which involve a thousand fortunes in the business of a day, and complicate innumerable incidents in one great transaction, afford few lessons applicable to private life, which derives its comforts and its wretchedness from the right or wrong management of things, which nothing but their frequency makes considerable, and which can have no place in those relations which never descend below the consultation

of senates, the motions of armies, and the schemes of conspirators.

I have often thought that there has rarely passed a life of which a judicious and faithful narrative would not be useful. For not only every man has, in the mighty mass of the world, great numbers in the same condition with himself, to whom his mistakes and miscarriages, escapes and expedients, would be of immediate and apparent use, but there is such a uniformity in the state of man, considered apart from adventitious and separable decorations and disguises, that there is scarce any possibility of good or ill but is common to human kind. A great part of the time of those who are placed at the greatest distance by fortune or by temper, must unavoidably pass in the same manner; and though, when the claims of nature are satisfied, caprice, and vanity, and accident begin to produce discriminations and peculiarities, yet the eye is not very heedful or quick which cannot discover the same causes still terminating their influence in the same effects, though sometimes accelerated, sometimes retarded, or perplexed by multiplied combinations. We are all prompted by the same motives, all deceived by the same fallacies, all animated by hope, obstructed by danger, entangled by desire, and seduced by pleasure.

It is frequently objected to relations of particular lives, that they are not distinguished by any striking or wonderful vicissitudes. The scholar, who passed his life among his books; the merchant, who conducted only his own affairs; the priest, whose sphere of action was not extended beyond that of his duty, are considered as no proper objects of public regard, however they might have excelled in their several stations, whatever might have been their learning, integrity, and piety. But this notion arises from false measures of excellence and dignity, and must be eradicated by considering that, in the es-

teem of uncorrupted reason, what is of most use is of most value.

It is, indeed, not improper to take honest advantages of prejudice, and to gain attention by a celebrated name; but the business of the biographer is often to pass slightly over those performances and incidents which produce vulgar greatness, to lead the thoughts into domestic privacies, and display the minute details of daily life, where exterior appendages are cast aside, and men excel each other only by prudence and by virtue. The account of Thuanus is, with great propriety, said by its author to have been written, that it might lay open to posterity the private and familiar character of that man, whose candour and genius will to the end of time be by his writings preserved in admiration.

There are many invisible circumstances which, whether we read as inquirers after natural or moral knowledge, whether we intend to enlarge our science or increase our virtue, are more important than public occurrences. Thus Sallust, the great master of nature, has not forgotten, in his account of Catiline, to remark, that *his walk was now quick and again slow*, as an indication of a mind revolving something with violent commotion. Thus the story of Melancthon affords a striking lecture on the value of time, by informing us that, when he made an appointment, he expected not only the hour, but the minute to be fixed, that the day might not run out in the idleness of suspense: and all the plans and enterprises of De Witt are now of less importance to the world than that part of his personal character which represents him as *careful of his health and negligent of his life*.

But biography has often been allotted to writers who seem very little acquainted with the nature of their task, or very negligent about the performance. They rarely afford any other account than might be collected from public papers; but imagine them-

selves writing a life when they exhibit a chronological series of actions or preferments; and so little regard the manners or behaviour of their heroes, that more knowledge may be gained of a man's real character by a short conversation with one of his servants, than from a formal and studied narrative, begun with his pedigree and ended with his funeral.

If now and then they condescend to inform the world of particular facts, they are not always so happy as to select the most important. I know not well what advantage posterity can receive from the only circumstance by which Tickell has distinguished Addison from the rest of mankind, *the irregularity of his pulse*: nor can I think myself overpaid for the time spent in reading the life of Malherb, by being enabled to relate, after the learned biographer, that Malherb had two predominant opinions; one, that the looseness of a single woman might destroy all her boast of ancient descent; the other, that the French beggars made use very improperly and barbarously of the phrase *noble gentleman*, because either word included the sense of both.

There are, indeed, some natural reasons why these narratives are often written by such as were not likely to give much instruction or delight, and why most accounts of particular persons are barren and useless. If a life be delayed till interest and envy are at an end, we may hope for impartiality, but must expect little intelligence; for the incidents which give excellence to biography are of a volatile and evanescent kind, such as soon escape the memory and are rarely transmitted by tradition. We know how few can portray a living acquaintance, except by his most prominent and observable particularities, and the grosser features of his mind; and it may be easily imagined how much of this little knowledge may be lost in imparting it, and how soon a succession of copies will lose all resemblance of the original.

If the biographer writes from personal knowledge, and makes haste to gratify the public curiosity, there is danger lest his interest, his fear, his gratitude, or his tenderness overpower his fidelity, and tempt him to conceal, if not to invent. There are many who think it an act of piety to hide the faults or failings of their friends, even when they can no longer suffer by their detection; we therefore see whole ranks of characters adorned with uniform panegyric, and not to be known from one another but by extrinsic and casual circumstances. "Let me remember," says Hale, "when I find myself inclined to pity a criminal, that there is likewise a pity due to the country." If we owe regard to the memory of the dead, there is yet more respect to be paid to knowledge, to virtue, and to truth.

DISSATISFACTION WITH OUR CONDITION IN LIFE.

"Now with two hundred slaves he crowds his train,
Now walks with ten. In high and haughty strain,
At morn, of kings and governors he prates;
At night, 'A frugal table, oh ye fates,
A little shell the sacred salt to hold,
And clothes, though coarse, to keep me from the cold.'"
HOR.—FRANCIS'S *Trans.*

It has been remarked, perhaps, by every writer who has left behind him observations upon life, that no man is pleased with his present state; which proves equally unsatisfactory, says Horace, whether fallen upon by chance or chosen with deliberation; we are always disgusted with some circumstance or other of our situation, and imagine the

condition of others more abundant in blessings or less exposed to calamities.

This universal discontent has been generally mentioned with great severity of censure, as unreasonable in itself, since of two, equally envious of each other, both cannot have the larger share of happiness, and as tending to darken life with unnecessary gloom, by withdrawing our minds from the contemplation and enjoyment of that happiness which our state affords us, and fixing our attention upon foreign objects, which we only behold to depress ourselves, and increase our misery by injurious comparisons.

When this opinion of the felicity of others predominates in the heart, so as to excite resolutions of obtaining, at whatever price, the condition to which such transcendent privileges are supposed to be annexed; when it bursts into action, and produces fraud, violence, and injustice, it is to be pursued with all the rigour of legal punishments. But, while operating only upon the thoughts, it disturbs none but him who has happened to admit it, and however it may interrupt content, makes no attack on piety or virtue, I cannot think it so far criminal or ridiculous but that it may deserve some pity and admit some excuse.

That all are equally happy or miserable I suppose none is sufficiently enthusiastical to maintain; because, though we cannot judge of the condition of others, yet every man has found frequent vicissitudes in his own state, and must therefore be convinced that life is susceptible of more or less felicity. What, then, shall forbid us to endeavour the alteration of that which is capable of being improved, and to grasp at augmentations of good when we know it possible to be increased, and believe that any particular change of situation will increase it?

If he that finds himself uneasy may reasonably

make efforts to rid himself from vexation, all mankind have a sufficient plea for some degree of restlessness, and the fault seems to be little more than too much temerity of conclusion in favour of something not yet experienced, and too much readiness to believe that the misery which our own passions and appetites produce is brought upon us by accidental causes and external efficient.

It is, indeed, frequently discovered by us that we complained too hastily of peculiar hardships, and imagined ourselves distinguished by embarrassments in which other classes of men are equally entangled. We often change a lighter for a greater evil, and wish ourselves restored again to the state from which we thought it desirable to be delivered. But this knowledge, though it is easily gained by the trial, is not always attainable any other way, and that error cannot justly be reproached which reason could not obviate nor prudence avoid.

To take a view at once distinct and comprehensive of human life, with all its intricacies of combination and varieties of connexion, is beyond the power of mortal intelligences. Of the state with which practice has not acquainted us, we snatch a glimpse, we discern a point, and regulate the rest by passion and by fancy. In this inquiry every favourite prejudice, every innate desire, is busy to deceive us. We are unhappy, at least less happy than our nature seems to admit; we necessarily desire the melioration of our lot; what we desire we very reasonably seek, and what we seek we are naturally eager to believe that we have found. Our confidence is often disappointed, but our reason is not convinced, and there is no man who does not hope for something which he has not, though perhaps his wishes lie inactive because he foresees the difficulty of attainment. As, among the numerous students of Hermetic philosophy, not one appears to have desisted from the task of transmutation from

conviction of its impossibility, but from weariness of toil or impatience of delay, a broken body or exhausted fortune.

Irresolution and immutability are often the faults of men whose views are wide and whose imagination is vigorous and excursive, because they cannot confine their thoughts within their own boundaries of action, but are continually ranging over all the scenes of human existence, and, consequently, are often apt to conceive that they fall upon new regions of pleasure and start new possibilities of happiness. Thus they are busied with a perpetual succession of schemes, and pass their lives in alternate elation and sorrow, for want of that calm and immovable acquiescence in their condition by which men of slower understandings are fixed for ever to a certain point, or led on in the plain, beaten track which their fathers and grandsires have trodden before them.

Of two conditions of life equally inviting to the prospect, that will always have the disadvantage which we have already tried; because the evils which we have felt we cannot extenuate; and though we have, perhaps from nature, the power as well of aggravating the calamity which we fear as of heightening the blessing we expect, yet in those meditations which we indulge by choice, and which are not forced upon the mind by necessity, we have always the art of fixing our regard upon the more pleasing images, and suffer hope to dispose the lights by which we look upon futurity.

The good and ill of different modes of life are sometimes so equally opposed, that perhaps no man ever yet made choice between them upon a full conviction and adequate knowledge; and, therefore, fluctuation of will is not more wonderful, when they are proposed to the election, than oscillations of a beam charged with equal weights. The mind no sooner imagines itself determined by some preva-

lent advantage, than some convenience of equal weight is discovered on the other side, and the resolutions which are suggested on the nicest examination are often repented as soon as they are taken.

Eumenes, a young man of great abilities, inherited a large estate from a father long eminent in conspicuous employments. His father, harassed with competitions and perplexed with multiplicity of business, recommended the quiet of a private station with so much force, that Eumenes for some years resisted every motion of ambitious wishes; but, being once provoked by the sight of oppression which he could not redress, he began to think it the duty of an honest man to enable himself to protect others, and gradually felt a desire of greatness, excited by a thousand projects of advantage to his country. His fortune placed him in the senate, his knowledge and eloquence advanced him at court, and he possessed that authority and influence which he had resolved to exert for the happiness of mankind.

He now became acquainted with greatness, and was in a short time convinced that, in proportion as the power of doing well is enlarged, the temptations to do ill are multiplied and enforced. He felt himself every moment in danger of being either seduced or driven from his honest purposes. Sometimes a friend was to be gratified, and sometimes a rival to be crushed, by means which his conscience could not approve. Sometimes he was forced to comply with the prejudices of the public, and sometimes with the schemes of the ministry. He was, by degrees, wearied with perpetual struggles to unite policy and virtue, and went back to retirement as the shelter of innocence, persuaded that he could only hope to benefit mankind by a blameless example of private virtue. Here he spent some years in tranquillity and beneficence; but, finding that corruption increased and false opinions in government pre-

ailed, he thought himself again summoned to posts of public trust, from which new evidence of his own weakness again determined him to retire.

Thus men may be made inconstant by virtue and by vice, by too much or too little thought; yet inconstancy, however dignified by its motives, is always to be avoided, because life allows us but a small time for inquiry and experiment; and he that steadily endeavours at excellence, in whatever employment, will more benefit mankind than he that hesitates in choosing his part till he is called to the performance. The traveller that resolutely follows a rough and winding path, will sooner reach the end of his journey than he that is always changing his direction, and wastes the hours of daylight in looking for smoother ground and shorter passages.

SIMILARITY OF CHARACTER NECESSARY TO FRIENDSHIP.

“To live in friendship is to have the same desires and the same aversions.”

WHEN Socrates was building himself a house at Athens, being asked by one that observed the littleness of the design, why a man so eminent would not have an abode more suitable to his dignity, he replied, that he should think himself sufficiently accommodated if he could see that narrow habitation filled with real friends. Such was the opinion of this great master of human life concerning the infrequency of such a union of minds as might deserve the name of friendship, that among the multitudes whom vanity or curiosity, civility or veneration, crowded about him, he did not expect that very

spacious apartments would be necessary to contain all that should regard him with sincere kindness or adhere to him with steady fidelity.

So many qualities are indeed requisite to the possibility of friendship, and so many accidents must concur to its rise and its continuance, that the greatest part of mankind content themselves without it, and supply its place as they can with interest and dependance.

Multitudes are unqualified for a constant and warm reciprocation of benevolence, as they are incapacitated for any other elevated excellence, by perpetual attention to their interest and unresisting subjection to their passions. Long habits may superinduce inability to deny any desire, or repress, by superior motives, the importunities of any immediate gratification, and an inveterate selfishness will imagine all advantages diminished in proportion as they are communicated.

But not only this hateful and confirmed corruption, but many varieties of disposition not inconsistent with common degrees of virtue, may exclude friendship from the heart. Some, ardent enough in their benevolence, and defective neither in officiousness nor liberality, are mutable and uncertain, soon attracted by new objects, disgusted without offence, and alienated without enmity. Others are soft and flexible, easily influenced by reports or whispers, ready to catch alarms from every dubious circumstance, and to listen to every suspicion which envy and flattery shall suggest, to follow the opinion of every confident adviser, and move by the impulse of the last breath. Some are impatient of contradiction, more willing to go wrong by their own judgment than to be indebted for a better or a safer way to the sagacity of another, inclined to consider counsel as insult, and inquiry as want of confidence, and to confer their regard on no other terms than unreserved submission and implicit compliance.

Some are dark and involved, equally careful to conceal good and bad purposes, and pleased with producing effects by invisible means, and showing their design only in its execution. Others are universally communicative, alike open to every eye, and equally profuse of their own secrets and those of others, without the necessary vigilance of caution or the honest arts of prudent integrity, ready to accuse without malice and to betray without treachery. Any of these may be useful to the community, and pass through the world with the reputation of good purposes and uncorrupted morals, but they are unfit for close and tender intimacies. He cannot properly be chosen for a friend whose kindness is exhaled by its own warmth or frozen by the first blast of slander; he cannot be a useful counsellor who will hear no opinion but his own: he will not much invite confidence whose principal maxim is to suspect; nor can the candour and frankness of that man be much esteemed, who spreads his arms to human kind, and makes every man without distinction a denizen of his bosom.

That friendship may be at once fond and lasting, there must not only be equal virtue on each part, but virtue of the same kind; not only the same end must be proposed, but the same means must be approved by both. We are often, by superficial accomplishments and accidental endearments, induced to love those whom we cannot esteem; we are sometimes, by great abilities and incontestable evidences of virtue, compelled to esteem those whom we cannot love. But friendship, compounded of esteem and love, derives from one its tenderness, and its permanence from the other; and therefore requires not only that its candidates should gain the judgment, but that they should attract the affections; that they should not only be firm in the day of distress, but gay in the hour of jollity; not only useful in exigences, but pleasing in familiar life; their

presence should give cheerfulness as well as courage, and dispel alike the gloom of fear and of melancholy.

To this mutual complacency is generally requisite a uniformity of opinions, at least of those active and conspicuous principles which discriminate parties in government and sects in religion, and which every day operate more or less on the common business of life. For though great tenderness has, perhaps, been sometimes known to continue between men eminent in contrary factions, yet such friends are to be shown rather as prodigies than examples, and it is no more proper to regulate our conduct by such instances than to leap a precipice because some have fallen from it and escaped with life.

It cannot but be extremely difficult to preserve private kindness in the midst of public opposition, in which will necessarily be involved a thousand incidents extending their influence to conversation and privacy. Men engaged, by moral or religious motives, in contrary parties, will generally look with different eyes upon every man, and decide almost every question upon different principles. When such occasions of dispute happen, to comply is to betray our cause, and to maintain friendship by ceasing to deserve it; to be silent is to lose the happiness and dignity of independence, to live in perpetual constraint, and to desert, if not to betray: and who shall determine which of two friends shall yield where neither believes himself mistaken, and both confess the importance of the question? What then remains but contradiction and debate? And from those what can be expected but acrimony and vehemence, the insolence of triumph, the vexation of defeat; and, in time, a weariness of contest and an extinction of benevolence? Exchange of endearments and intercourse of civility may continue, indeed, as boughs may for a while be verdant when

the root is wounded: but the poison of discord is infused, and though the countenance may preserve its smile, the heart is hardening and contracting.

That man will not be long agreeable whom we see only in times of seriousness and severity; and, therefore, to maintain the softness and serenity of benevolence, it is necessary that friends partake each other's pleasures as well as cares, and be led to the same diversions by similitude of taste. This is, however, not to be considered as equally indispensable with conformity of principles, because any man may honestly, according to the precepts of Horace, resign the gratifications of taste to the humour of another, and friendship may well deserve the sacrifice of pleasure, though not of conscience.

It was once confessed to me by a painter, that no professor of his art ever loved another. This declaration is so far justified by the knowledge of life, as to damp the hopes of warm and constant friendship between men whom their studies have made competitors, and whom every favourer and every censurer are hourly inciting against each other. The utmost expectation that experience can warrant is, that they should forbear open hostilities and secret machinations, and, when the whole fraternity is attacked, be able to unite against a common foe. Some, however, though few, may perhaps be found, in whom emulation has not been able to overpower generosity, who are distinguished from lower beings by nobler motives than the love of fame, and can preserve the sacred flame of friendship from the gusts of pride and the rubbish of interest.

Friendship is seldom lasting but between equals, or where the superiority on one side is reduced by some equivalent advantage on the other. Benefits which cannot be repaid, and obligations which cannot be discharged, are not commonly found to increase affection; they excite gratitude, indeed, and heighten veneration; but commonly take away that

easy freedom and familiarity of intercourse, without which, though there may be fidelity, and zeal, and admiration, there cannot be friendship. Thus imperfect are all earthly blessings; the great effect of friendship is beneficence, yet by the first act of uncommon kindness it is endangered, like plants that bear their fruit and die. Yet this consideration ought not to restrain bounty or repress compassion; for duty is to be preferred before convenience, and he that loses part of the pleasures of friendship by his generosity, gains in its place the gratulation of his conscience.

OBIDAH AND THE HERMIT: AN ORIENTAL TALE.

"The cheerful sage, when solemn dictates fail,
Conceals the moral counsel in a tale."

OBIDAH, the son of Abensina, left the caravansary early in the morning, and pursued his journey through the plains of Indostan. He was fresh and vigorous with rest; he was animated by hope; he was incited by desire; he walked swiftly forward over the valleys, and saw the hills gradually rising before him. As he passed along his ears were delighted with the morning song of the bird of paradise, he was fanned by the last flutters of the sinking breeze, and sprinkled with dew by groves of spices; he sometimes contemplated the towering height of the oak, monarch of the hills; and sometimes caught the gentle fragrance of the primrose, eldest daughter of the spring; all his senses were gratified, and all care was banished from his heart.

Thus he went on till the sun approached his me-

ridian, and the increasing heat preyed upon his strength; he then looked round about him for some more commodious path. He saw on his right hand a grove that seemed to wave in shades as a sign of invitation; he entered it, and found the coolness and verdure irresistibly pleasant. He did not, however, forget whither he was travelling, but found a narrow way bordered with flowers, which appeared to have the same direction with the main road, and was pleased that, by this happy experiment, he had found means to unite pleasure with business, and to gain the rewards of diligence without suffering its fatigues. He therefore still continued to walk for a time, without the least remission of his ardour, except that he was sometimes tempted to stop by the music of the birds which the heat had assembled in the shade; and sometimes amused himself with plucking the flowers that covered the banks on either side, or the fruits that hung upon the branches. At last the green path began to decline from its first tendency, and to wind among hills and thickets cooled with waterfalls. Here Obidah paused for a time, and began to consider whether it were longer safe to forsake the known and common track; but remembering that the heat was now in its greatest violence, and that the plain was dusty and uneven, he resolved to pursue the new path, which he supposed only to make a few meanders, in compliance with the varieties of the ground, and to end at last in the common road.

Having thus calmed his solicitude, he renewed his pace, though he suspected that he was not gaining ground. This uneasiness of his mind inclined him to lay hold on every new object, and give way to every sensation that might sooth or divert him. He listened to every echo, he mounted every hill for a fresh prospect, he turned aside to every cascade, and pleased himself with tracing the course of a gentle river that rolled among the trees, and

watered a large region with innumerable circumvolutions. In these amusements the hours passed away uncounted, his deviations had perplexed his memory, and he knew not towards what point to travel. He stood pensive and confused, afraid to go forward lest he should go wrong, yet conscious that the time of loitering was now past. While he was thus tortured with uncertainty, the sky was overspread with clouds, the day vanished from before him, and a sudden tempest gathered round his head. He was now roused by his danger to a quick and painful remembrance of his folly; he now saw how happiness is lost when ease is consulted; he lamented the unmanly impatience that prompted him to seek shelter in the grove, and despised the petty curiosities that led him on from trifle to trifle. While he was thus reflecting, the air grew blacker, and a clap of thunder broke his meditation.

He now resolved to do what remained yet in his power, to tread back the ground which he had passed, and to try to find some issue where the wood might open into the plain. He prostrated himself on the ground, and commended his life to the Lord of nature. He rose with confidence and tranquillity, and pressed on with his sabre in his hand, for the beasts of the desert were in motion, and on every hand were heard the mingled howls of rage and fear, and ravage and expiration; all the horrors of darkness and solitude surrounded him: the winds roared in the woods, and the torrents tumbled from the hills,

“ Work'd into sudden rage by wintry showers,
Down the steep hill the roaring torrent pours!
The mountain shepherd hears the distant noise.”

Thus forlorn and distressed, he wandered through the wild, without knowing whither he was going, or whether he was every moment drawing nearer to safety or to destruction. At length, not fear, but

labour, began to overcome him; his breath grew short, and his knees trembled, and he was on the point of lying down in resignation to his fate, when he beheld through the brambles the glimmer of a taper. He advanced towards the light, and finding that it proceeded from the cottage of a hermit, he called humbly at the door and obtained admission. The old man set before him such provisions as he had collected for himself, on which Obidah fed with eagerness and gratitude.

When the repast was over, "Tell me," said the hermit, "by what chance thou hast been brought hither; I have been now twenty years an inhabitant of the wilderness, in which I never saw a man before." Obidah then related the occurrences of his journey, without any concealment or palliation.

"Son," said the hermit, "let the errors and follies, the dangers and escapes of this day, sink deep into thy heart. Remember, my son, that human life is a journey of a day. We rise in the morning of youth full of vigour and full of expectation; we set forward with spirit and hope, with gayety and with diligence, and travel on a while in the straight road of piety towards the mansions of rest. In a short time we remit our fervour, and endeavour to find some mitigation of our duty, and some more easy means of obtaining the same end. We then relax our vigour, and resolve no longer to be terrified at crimes at a distance, but rely upon our own constancy, and venture to approach what we resolve never to touch. We thus enter the bowers of ease and repose in the shades of security. Here the heart softens and vigilance subsides; we are then willing to inquire whether another advance cannot be made, and whether we may not, at least, turn our eyes upon the gardens of pleasure. We approach them with scruple and hesitation; we enter them, but enter timorous and trembling, and

always hope to pass through them without losing the road of virtue, which we, for a while, keep in our sight, and to which we propose to return. But temptation succeeds temptation, and one compliance prepares us for another; we in time lose the happiness of innocence, and solace our disquiet with sensual gratifications. By degrees we let fall the remembrance of our original intention, and quit the only adequate object of rational desire. We entangle ourselves in business, immerse ourselves in luxury, and rove through the labyrinths of inconstancy, till the darkness of old age begins to invade us, and disease and anxiety obstruct our way. We then look back upon our lives with horror, with sorrow, with repentance; and wish, but too often vainly wish, that we had not forsaken the ways of virtue. Happy are they, my son, who shall learn from thy example not to despair, but shall remember that, though the day is past and their strength is wasted, there yet remains one effort to be made; that reformation is never hopeless, nor sincere endeavours ever unassisted; that the wanderer may at length return after all his errors, and that he who implores strength and courage from above shall find danger and difficulty give way before him. Go now, my son, to thy repose, commit thyself to the care of Omnipotence, and, when the morning calls again to toil, begin anew thy journey and thy life."

VANITY THE PASSION OF LITTLE MINDS

“How few
Know their own good; or, knowing it, pursue?
How void of reason are our hopes and fears?”

JUV.—DRYDEN'S *Trans.*

THE folly of human wishes and pursuits has always been a standing subject of mirth and declamation, and has been ridiculed and lamented from age to age, till perhaps the fruitless repetition of complaints and censures may be justly numbered among the subjects of censure and complaint.

Some of these instructors of mankind have not contented themselves with checking the overflows of passion, and lopping the exuberance of desire, but have attempted to destroy the root as well as the branches; and not only to confine the mind within bounds, but to smooth it for ever by a dead calm. They have employed their reason and eloquence to persuade us that nothing is worth the wish of a wise man, have represented all earthly good and evil as indifferent, and counted among vulgar errors the dread of pain and the love of life.

It is almost always the unhappiness of a victorious disputant to destroy his own authority by claiming too many consequences or diffusing his proposition to an indefensible extent. When we have heated our zeal in a cause and elated our confidence with success, we are naturally inclined to pursue the same train of reasoning to establish some collateral truth, to remove some adjacent difficulty, and to take in the whole comprehension of our system. As a prince, in the ardour of acquisition, is willing to secure his first conquest by the addition of another, adds fortress to fortress and

city to city, till despair and opportunity turn his enemies upon him, and he loses in a moment the glory of a reign.

The philosophers having found an easy victory over those desires which we produce in ourselves, and which terminate in some imaginary state of happiness unknown and unattainable, proceeded to make farther inroads upon the heart, and attacked at last our senses and our instincts. They continued to war upon nature with arms by which only folly could be conquered; they therefore lost the trophies of their former combats, and were considered no longer with reverence or regard.

Yet it cannot be with justice denied, that these men have been very useful monitors, and have left many proofs of strong reason, deep penetration, and accurate attention to the affairs of life, which it is now our business to separate from the foam of a boiling imagination, and to apply judiciously to our own use. They have shown that most of the conditions of life, which raise the envy of the timorous and rouse the ambition of the daring, are empty shows of felicity, which, when they become familiar, lose their power of delighting; and that the most prosperous and exalted have very few advantages over a meaner and more obscure fortune, when their dangers and solitudes are balanced against their equipage, their banquets, and their palaces.

It is natural for every man uninstructed to murmur at his condition, because, in the general infelicity of life, he feels his own miseries without knowing that they are common to all the rest of the species; and, therefore, though he will not be less sensible of pain by being told that others are equally tormented, he will at least be freed from the temptation of seeking, by perpetual changes, that ease which is nowhere to be found; and, though

his disease still continues, he escapes the hazard of exasperating it by remedies.

The gratifications which affluence of wealth, extent of power, and eminence of reputation confer, must be always, by their own nature, confined to a very small number; and the life of the greater part of mankind must be lost in empty wishes and painful comparisons, were not the balm of philosophy shed upon us, and our discontent at the appearances of an unequal distribution soothed and appeased.

It seemed, perhaps, below the dignity of the great masters of moral learning to descend to familiar life, and caution mankind against the petty ambition which is known among us by the name of Vanity, which yet had been an undertaking not unworthy of the longest beard and most solemn austerity. For though the passions of little minds acting in low stations do not fill the world with bloodshed and devastations, or mark by great events the periods of time, yet they torture the breast on which they seize, infest those that are placed within the reach of their influence, destroy private quiet and private virtue, and undermine insensibly the happiness of the world.

The desire of excellence is laudable, but is very frequently ill directed. We fall by chance into some class of mankind, and, without consulting nature or wisdom, resolve to gain their regard by those qualities which they happen to esteem. I once knew a man remarkably dim-sighted, who, by conversing much with country gentlemen, found himself irresistibly determined to sylvan honours. His great ambition was to shoot flying, and he therefore spent whole days in the woods pursuing game; which, before he was near enough to see them, his approach frightened away.

When it happens that the desire tends to objects which produce no competition, it may be overlook-

ed with some indulgence, because, however fruitless or absurd, it cannot have ill effects upon the morals. But most of our enjoyments owe their value to the peculiarity of possession, and, when they are rated at too high a value, give occasion to stratagems of malignity, and incite opposition, hatred, and defamation. The contest of two rural beauties for preference and distinction is often sufficiently keen and rancorous to fill their breasts with all those passions which are generally thought the curse only of senates, of armies, and of courts, and the rival dancers of an obscure assembly have their partisans and abettors, often not less exasperated against each other than those who are promoting the interests of rival monarchs.

It is common to consider those whom we find infected with an unreasonable regard for trifling accomplishments, as chargeable with all the consequences of the folly, and as the authors of their own unhappiness; but perhaps those whom we thus scorn or detest have more claim to tenderness than has been yet allowed them. Before we permit our severity to break loose upon any fault or error, we ought surely to consider how much we have countenanced or promoted it. We see multitudes busy in the pursuit of riches, at the expense of wisdom and of virtue; but we see the rest of mankind approving their conduct, and inciting their eagerness by paying that regard and deference to wealth which wisdom and virtue only can deserve. We see women universally jealous of the reputation of their beauty, and frequently look with contempt on the care with which they study their complexions, endeavour to preserve or to supply the bloom of youth, regulate every ornament, twist their hair into curls, and shade their faces from the weather. We recommend the care of their noble part, and tell them how little addition is made by all their arts to the graces of the mind. But when was it

known that female goodness or knowledge was able to attract that officiousness or inspire that ardour which beauty produces whenever it appears? And with what hope can we endeavour to persuade the ladies that the time spent at the toilet is lost in vanity, when they have every moment some new conviction that their interest is more effectually promoted by a riband well disposed than by the brightest act of heroic virtue?

In every instance of vanity it will be found that the blame ought to be shared among more than it generally reaches; all who exalt trifles by immoderate praise, or instigate needless emulation by invidious incitements, are to be considered as perverters of reason and corrupters of the world; and, since every man is obliged to promote happiness and virtue, he should be careful not to mislead unwary minds by appearing to set too high a value upon things by which no real excellence is conferred.

UNIVERSALITY OF HOPE.

“Exiles, the proverb says, subsist on hope.
Delusive hope still points to distant good,
To good that mocks approach.”

THERE is no temper so generally indulged as hope; other passions still operate by starts on particular occasions or in certain parts of life; but hope begins with the first power of comparing our actual with our possible state, and attends us through every stage and period, always urging us forward to new acquisitions, and holding out some distant blessing to our view, promising us either relief from pain or increase of happiness.

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Hope is necessary in every condition. The miseries of poverty, of sickness, and of captivity would, without this comfort, be insupportable; nor does it appear that the happiest lot of terrestrial existence can set us above the want of this general blessing; or that life, when the gifts of nature and of fortune are accumulated upon it, would not still be wretched, were it not elevated and delighted by the expectation of some new possession, of some enjoyment yet behind, by which the wish shall be at last satisfied, and the heart filled up to its utmost extent.

Hope is, indeed, very fallacious, and promises what it seldom gives; but its promises are more valuable than the gifts of fortune, and it seldom frustrates us without assuring us of recompensing the delay by a greater bounty.

I was musing on this strange inclination which every man feels to deceive himself, and considering the advantages and dangers proceeding from this gay prospect of futurity, when, falling asleep, on a sudden I found myself placed in a garden, of which my sight could descry no limits. Every scene about me was gay and gladsome, light with sunshine, and fragrant with perfumes; the ground was painted with all the variety of spring, and all the choir of nature was singing in the groves. When I had recovered from the first raptures with which the confusion of pleasure had for a time entranced me, I began to take a particular and deliberate view of this delightful region. I then perceived that I had yet higher gratifications to expect, and that, at a small distance from me, there were brighter flowers, clearer fountains, and more lofty groves, where the birds, which I yet heard but faintly, were exerting all the power of melody. The trees about me were beautiful with verdure and fragrant with blossoms; but I was tempted to leave them by the sight of ripe fruits, which seemed to hang only to be plucked. I therefore walked hast-

ily forward, but found, as I proceeded, that the colours of the field faded at my approach, the fruit fell before I reached it, the birds flew, still singing before me, and, though I pressed onward with great celerity, I was still in sight of pleasures of which I could not yet gain the possession, and which seemed to mock my diligence and to retire as I advanced.

Though I was confounded with so many alternations of joy and grief, I yet persisted to go forward, in hopes that these fugitive delights would in time be overtaken. At length I saw an innumerable multitude of every age and sex, who seemed all to partake of some general felicity; for every cheek was flushed with confidence, and every eye sparkled with eagerness; yet each appeared to have some particular and secret pleasure, and very few were willing to communicate their intentions or extend their concern beyond themselves. Most of them seemed, by the rapidity of their motion, too busy to gratify the curiosity of a stranger, and therefore I was content for a while to gaze upon them, without interrupting them with troublesome inquiries. At last I observed one man worn with time and unable to struggle in the crowd: and therefore, supposing him more at leisure, I began to accost him; but he turned from me with anger, and told me he must not be disturbed, for the great hour of projection was now come, when Mercury should lose his wings, and slavery should no longer dig the mine for gold.

I left him and attempted another, whose softness of mien and easy movement gave me reason to hope for a more agreeable reception; but he told me, with a low bow, that nothing would make him more happy than an opportunity of serving me, which he could not now want, for a place which he had been twenty years soliciting would be soon vacant. From him I had recourse to the next, who was departing in haste to take possession of the es-

tate of an uncle, who, by the course of nature, could not live long. He that followed was preparing to dive for treasure in a new-invented bell; and another was on the point of discovering the longitude.

Being thus rejected wheresoever I applied myself for information, I began to imagine it best to desist from inquiry, and try what my own observation would discover; but, seeing a young man, gay and thoughtless, I resolved on one more experiment, and was informed that I was in the garden of Hope, the daughter of Desire, and that all those whom I saw thus tumultuously bustling round me were incited by the promises of Hope, and hastening to seize the gifts which she held in her hand.

I turned my sight upward, and saw a goddess in the bloom of youth sitting on a throne; around her lay all the gifts of fortune, and all the blessings of life were spread abroad to view; she had a perpetual gayety of aspect, and every one imagined that her smile, which was impartial and general, was directed to himself, and triumphed in his own superiority to others, who had conceived the same confidence from the same mistake.

I then mounted an eminence, from which I had a more extensive view of the whole place, and could with less perplexity consider the different conduct of the crowds that filled it. From this station I observed that the entrance into the garden of Hope was by two gates, one of which was kept by Reason and the other by Fancy. Reason was surly and scrupulous, and seldom turned the key without many interrogatories and long hesitation; but Fancy was a kind and gentle portress; she held her gate wide open, and welcomed all equally to the district under her superintendence: so that the passage was crowded by all those who either feared the examination of Reason, or had been rejected by her.

From the gate of Reason there was a way to the throne of Hope, by a craggy, slippery, and winding path, called the *Strait of Difficulty*, which those who entered with the permission of the guard endeavoured to climb. But, though they surveyed the way very cheerfully before they began to rise, and marked out the several stages of their progress, they commonly found unexpected obstacles, and were obliged frequently to stop on the sudden where they imagined the way plain and even. A thousand intricacies embarrassed them, a thousand slips threw them back, and a thousand pitfalls impeded their advance. So formidable were the dangers and so frequent the miscarriages, that many returned from the first attempt, and many fainted in the midst of the way, and only a very small number were led up to the summit of Hope by the hand of Fortitude. Of these few the greater part, when they had obtained the gift which Hope had promised them, regretted the labour which it had cost, and felt in their success the regret of disappointment; the rest retired with their prize, and were led by Wisdom to the bowers of Content.

Turning, then, to the gate of Fancy, I could find no way to the seat of Hope; but, though she sat full in view, and held out her gifts with an air of invitation, which filled every heart with rapture, the mountain was on that side inaccessibly steep, but so channelled and shaded that none perceived the impossibility of ascending it, but each imagined himself to have discovered a way to which the rest were strangers. Many expedients were indeed tried by this industrious tribe, of whom some were making themselves wings, which others were contriving to actuate by the perpetual motion. But, with all their labour and all their artifices, they never rose above the ground, or quickly fell back, nor ever approached the throne of Hope, but continued still to gaze at a distance, and laughed at the

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slow progress of those whom they saw toiling in the *Strait of Difficulty*.

Part of the favourites of Fancy, when they had entered the garden, without making, like the rest, an attempt to climb the mountain, turned immediately to the vale of Idleness, a calm and undisturbed retirement, from whence they could always have Hope in prospect, and to which they pleased themselves with believing that she intended speedily to descend. These were indeed scorned by all the rest; but they seemed very little affected by contempt, advice, or reproof, but were resolved to expect at ease the favour of the goddess.

Among this gay race I was wandering, and found them ready to answer all my questions and willing to communicate their mirth; but turning round, I beheld two dreadful monsters entering the vale, one of whom I knew to be Age and the other Want. Sport and revelling were now at an end, and a universal shriek of affright and distress burst out and awaked me.

THE CHARACTER OF A MAN BEST KNOWN BY HIS CONDUCT AT HOME.

“Let us live well: were it alone for this
The baneful tongue of servants to despise:
Slander, that worst of poisons, ever finds
An easy entrance to ignoble minds.”

JUV.—HERVEY'S *Trans.*

THE younger Pliny has very justly observed, that of actions that deserve our attention, the most splendid are not always the greatest. Fame, and wonder, and applause are not excited but by external and adventitious circumstances, often distinct

and separate from virtue and heroism. Eminence of station, greatness of effect, and all the favours of fortune, must concur to place excellence in public view ; but fortitude, diligence, and patience, divested of their show, glide unobserved through the crowd of life, and suffer and act, though with the same vigour and constancy, yet without pity and without praise.

This remark may be extended to all parts of life. Nothing is to be estimated by its effect upon common eyes and common ears. A thousand miseries make silent and invisible inroads on mankind, and the heart feels innumerable throbs which never break into complaint. Perhaps, likewise, our pleasures are, for the most part, equally secret, and most are borne up by some private satisfaction, some internal consciousness, some latent hope, some peculiar prospect, which they never communicate, but reserve for solitary hours and clandestine meditation.

The main of life is, indeed, composed of small incidents and petty occurrences ; of wishes for objects not remote, and grief for disappointments of no fatal consequence ; of insect vexations, which sting us and fly away ; impertinences, which buzz a while about us and are heard no more ; of meteorous pleasures, which dance before us and are dissipated ; of compliments, which glide off the soul like other music, and are forgotten by him that gave and him that received them.

Such is the general heap out of which every man is to cull his own condition : for as the chymists tell us that all bodies are resolvable into the same elements, and that the boundless variety of things arises from the different proportions of very few ingredients, so a few pains and a few pleasures are all the materials of human life, and of these the proportions are partly allotted by Providence and partly left to the arrangement of reason and of choice.

As these are well or ill disposed, man is for the most part happy or miserable. For very few are involved in great events, or have their thread of life entwisted with the chain of causes on which armies or nations are suspended; and even those who seem wholly busied in public affairs, and elevated above low cares and trivial pleasures, pass the chief part of their time in familiar and domestic scenes; from these they came into public life, to these they are every hour recalled by passions not to be suppressed; in these they have the reward of their toils, and to these they at last retire.

The great end of prudence is to give cheerfulness to those hours which splendour cannot gild and acclamation cannot exhilarate; those soft intervals of unbended amusement, in which a man shrinks to his natural dimensions, and throws aside the ornaments or disguises which he feels in privacy to be useless encumbrances, and to lose all effect when they become familiar. To be happy at home is the ultimate result of all ambition, the end to which every enterprise and labour tends, and of which every desire prompts the prosecution.

It is, indeed, at home that every man must be known by those who would make a just estimate either of his virtue or felicity; for smiles and embroidery are alike occasional, and the mind is often dressed for show in painted honour and fictitious benevolence.

Every man must have found some whose lives, in every house but their own, were a continual series of hypocrisy, and who concealed under fair appearances bad qualities, which, whenever they thought themselves out of the reach of censure, broke out from their restraint like winds imprisoned in their caverns, and whom every one had reason to love but they whose love a wise man is chiefly solicitous to procure. And there are others who, without any show of general goodness,

and without the attractions by which popularity is conciliated, are received among their own families as bestowers of happiness, and revered as instructors, guardians, and benefactors.

The most authentic witnesses of any man's character are those who know him in his own family, and see him without any restraint or rule of conduct but such as he voluntarily prescribes to himself. If a man carries virtue with him into his private apartments, and takes no advantage of unlimited power or probable secrecy; if we trace him through the round of his time, and find that his character, with those allowances which mortal frailty must always want, is uniform and regular, we have all the evidence of his sincerity that one man can have with regard to another: and, indeed, as hypocrisy cannot be its own reward, we may, without hesitation, determine that his heart is pure.

The highest panegyric, therefore, that private virtue can receive is the praise of servants. For, however vanity or insolence may look down with contempt on the suffrage of men undignified by wealth and unenlightened by education, it very seldom happens that they commend or blame without justice. Vice and virtue are easily distinguished. Oppression, according to Harrington's aphorism, will be felt by those who cannot see it; and perhaps it falls out very often, that in moral questions, the philosophers in the gown and in the livery differ not so much in their sentiments as in their language, and have equal power of discerning right, though they cannot point it out to others with equal address.

There are very few faults to be committed in solitude, or without some agents, partners, confederates, or witnesses; and, therefore, the servant must commonly know the secrets of a master who has any secrets to intrust; and failings merely personal are so frequently exposed by that security

which pride and folly generally produce, and so inquisitively watched by that desire of reducing the inequalities of condition which the lower orders of the world will always feel, that the testimony of a menial domestic can seldom be considered as defective for want of knowledge. And though its impartiality may be sometimes suspected, it is at least as credible as that of equals, where rivalry instigates censure, or friendship dictates palliations.

The danger of betraying our weakness to our servants, and the impossibility of concealing it from them, may be justly considered as one motive to a regular and irreproachable life. For no condition is more hateful or despicable than his who has put himself in the power of his servant; in the power of him whom, perhaps, he has first corrupted by making him subservient to his vices, and whose fidelity he therefore cannot enforce by any precepts of honesty or reason. It is seldom known that authority thus acquired is possessed without insolence, or that the master is not forced to confess, by his tameness or forbearance, that he has enslaved himself by some foolish confidence. And his crime is equally punished, whatever part he takes of the choice to which he is reduced; and he is, from that fatal hour in which he sacrificed his dignity to his passions, in perpetual dread of insolence or defamation; of a controller at home or an accuser abroad. He is condemned to purchase, by continual bribes, that secrecy which bribes never secured, and which, after a long course of submission, promises, and anxieties, he will find violated in a fit of rage or in a frolic of drunkenness.

To dread no eye and to suspect no tongue is the great prerogative of innocence; an exemption granted only to invariable virtue. But guilt has always its horrors and solitudes: and, to make it yet more shameful and detestable, it is doomed

often to stand in awe of those to whom nothing could give influence or weight but their power of betraying.

REFLECTIONS ON OLD AGE.

"Time, thou devourer, and thou, envious age,
Who all destroy with keen corroding rage,
Beneath your jaws, whate'er have pleased or please
Must sink, consumed by swift or slow degrees."
OVID.—ELPHINSTON'S *Trans.*

AN old Greek epigrammatist, intending to show the miseries that attend the last stage of man, imprecates on them who are so foolish as to wish for long life the calamity of continuing to grow old from century to century. He thought that no adventitious or foreign pain was requisite; that decrepitude itself was an epitome of whatever is dreadful; and nothing could be added to the curse of age but that it should be extended beyond its natural limits.

The most indifferent or negligent spectator can indeed scarcely retire without heaviness of heart from a view of the last scenes of the tragedy of life, in which he finds those who, in the former parts of the drama, were distinguished by opposition of conduct, contrariety of designs, and dissimilitude of personal qualities all involved in one common distress, and all struggling with affliction which they cannot hope to overcome.

The other miseries which waylay our passage through the world, wisdom may escape and fortitude may conquer; by caution and circumspection we may steal along with very little to obstruct or incommode us; by spirit and vigour we may force a

way, and reward the vexation of contest by the pleasures of victory. But a time must come when our policy and bravery shall be equally useless; when we shall all sink into helplessness and sadness, without any power of receiving solace from the pleasures that have formerly delighted us, or any prospect of emerging into a second possession of the blessings that we have lost.

The industry of man has, indeed, not been wanting in endeavours to procure comforts for these hours of dejection and melancholy, and to gild the dreadful gloom with artificial light. The most usual support of old age is wealth. He whose possessions are large and whose chests are full, imagines himself always fortified against invasions on his authority. If he has lost all other means of government, if his strength and his reason fail him, he can at last alter his will; and, therefore, all that have hopes must likewise have fears, and he may still continue to give laws to such as have not ceased to regard their own interest.

This is, indeed, too frequently the citadel of the dotard, the last fortress to which age retires, and in which he makes the stand against the upstart race that seizes his domains, disputes his commands, and cancels his prescriptions. But here, though there may be safety, there is no pleasure; and what remains is but a proof that more was once possessed.

Nothing seems to have been more universally dreaded by the ancients than orbity, or want of children; and, indeed, to a man who has survived all the companions of his youth, all who have participated his pleasures and his cares, have been engaged in the same events, and filled their minds with the same conceptions, this full-peopled world is a dismal solitude. He stands forlorn and silent, neglected or insulted, in the midst of multitudes, animated with hopes which he cannot share, and

employed in business which he is no longer able to forward or retard; nor can he find any to whom his life or his death are of importance, unless he has secured some domestic gratifications, some tender employments, and endeared himself to some whose interest and gratitude may unite them to him.

So different are the colours of life as we look forward to the future or backward to the past, and so different the opinions and sentiments which this contrariety of appearance naturally produces, that the conversation of the young and old ends generally with contempt or pity on either side. To a young man entering the world with fulness of hope and ardour of pursuit, nothing is so unpleasing as the cold caution, the faint expectations, the scrupulous diffidence which experience and disappointments certainly infuse; and the old man wonders in his turn that the world never can grow wiser, that neither precepts nor testimonies can cure boys of their credulity and sufficiency, and that not one can be convinced that snares are laid for him till he finds himself entangled.

Thus one generation is always the scorn and wonder of the other, and the notions of the old and young are like liquors of different gravity and texture, which never can unite. The spirits of youth sublimed by health and volatilized by passion, soon leave behind them the phlegmatic sediment of weariness and deliberation, and burst out in temerity and enterprise. The tenderness, therefore, which nature infuses, and which long habits of beneficence confirm, is necessary to reconcile such opposition; and an old man must be a father to bear with patience those follies and absurdities which he will perpetually imagine himself to find in the schemes and expectations, the pleasures and the sorrows, of those who have not yet been hardened by time and chilled by frustration.

Yet it may be doubted whether the pleasure of

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seeing children ripening into strength be not over-balanced by the pain of seeing some fall in the blossom, and others blasted in their growth: some shaken down with storms, some tainted with cankers, and some shrivelled in the shade: and whether he that extends his care beyond himself does not multiply his anxieties more than his pleasures, and weary himself to no purpose by superintending what he cannot regulate.

But though age be to every order of human beings sufficiently terrible, it is particularly to be dreaded by fine ladies, who have had no other end or ambition than to fill up the day and the night with dress, diversions, and flattery; and who, having made no acquaintance with knowledge or with business, have constantly caught all their ideas from the current prattle of the hour, and been indebted for all their happiness to compliments and treats. With these ladies age begins early, and very often lasts long; it begins when their beauty fades, when their mirth loses its sprightliness, and their motion its ease. From that time, all which gave them joy vanishes from about them; they hear the praises bestowed on others which used to swell their bosoms with exultation. They visit the seats of felicity, and endeavour to continue the habit of being delighted. But pleasure is only received when we believe that we give it in return. Neglect and petulance inform them that their power and their value are past; and what then remains but a tedious and comfortless uniformity of time, without any motion of the heart or exercise of the reason.

Yet, however age may discourage us by its appearance from considering it in prospect, we shall all, by degrees, certainly be old; and therefore we ought to inquire what provision can be made against that time of distress; what happiness can be stored up against the winter of life; and how we may

pass our latter years with serenity and cheerfulness.

If it has been found by the experience of mankind that not even the best seasons of life are able to supply sufficient gratifications without anticipating uncertain felicitities, it cannot surely be supposed that old age, worn with labours, harassed with anxieties, and tortured with diseases, should have any gladness of its own, or feel any satisfaction from the contemplation of the present. All the comfort that can now be expected must be recalled from the past or borrowed from the future; the past is very soon exhausted; all the events or actions of which the memory can afford pleasure are quickly recollected; and the future lies beyond the grave, where it can be reached only by virtue and devotion.

Piety is the only proper and adequate relief of decaying man. He that grows old without religious hopes, as he declines into imbecility, and feels pains and sorrows incessantly crowding upon him, falls into a gulf of bottomless misery, in which every reflection must plunge him deeper, and where he finds only new gradations of anguish and precipices of horror.

DIFFERENT DEGREES OF VIRTUE.

“Succeeding times a silver age behold,
Excelling brass, but more excell'd by gold.”
OVID.—DRYDEN'S *Trans.*

HESTIOD, in his celebrated distribution of mankind, divides them into three orders of intellect. “The first place,” says he, “belongs to him that can by his own powers, discern what is right and fit, and penetrate to the remoter motives of action. The

second is claimed by him that is willing to hear instruction, and can perceive right and wrong when they are shown him by another; but he that has neither acuteness nor docility, who can neither find the way by himself nor will be led by others, is a wretch without use or value."

If we survey the moral world, it will be found that the same division may be made of men with regard to their virtue. There are some whose principles are so firmly fixed, whose conviction is so constantly present to their minds, and who have raised in themselves such ardent wishes for the approbation of God, and the happiness with which he has promised to reward obedience and perseverance, that they rise above all other cares and considerations, and uniformly examine every action and desire by comparing it with the Divine commands. There are others in a kind of equipoise between good and ill; who are moved on the one part by riches or pleasures, by the gratifications of passion and the delights of sense; and on the other by laws of which they own the obligation, and rewards of which they believe the reality, and whom a very small addition of weight turns either way. The third class consists of beings immersed in pleasures or abandoned to passion, without any desire of higher good, or any effort to extend their thoughts beyond immediate and gross satisfactions.

The second class is so much the most numerous, that it may be considered as comprising the whole body of mankind. Those of the last are not very many, and those of the first are very few; and neither the one nor the other fall much under the consideration of the moralist, whose precepts are intended chiefly for those who are endeavouring to go forward up the steep of virtue, not for those who have already reached the summit, or those who are resolved to stay for ever in their present situation.

To a man not versed in the living world, but accustomed to judge only by speculative reason, it is scarcely credible that any one should be in this state of indifference, or stand undetermined or unengaged, ready to follow the first call to either side. It seems certain that either a man must believe that virtue will make him happy, and resolve therefore to be virtuous, or think that he may be happy without virtue, and therefore cast off all care but for his present interest. It seems impossible that conviction should be on one side and practice on the other; and that he who has seen the right way should voluntarily shut his eyes, that he may quit it with more tranquillity. Yet all these absurdities are every hour to be found; the wisest and best men deviate from known and acknowledged duties by inadvertency or surprise, and most are good no longer than while temptation is away, than while their passions are without excitements, and their opinions are free from the counteraction of any other motive.

Among the sentiments which almost every man changes as he advances into years, is the expectation of uniformity of character. He that, without acquaintance with the power of desire, the cogency of distress, the complications of affairs, or the force of partial influence, has filled his mind with the excellence of virtue, and, having never tried his resolution in any encounter with hope or fear, believes it able to stand firm whatever shall oppose it, will be always clamorous against the smallest failure, ready to exact the utmost punctualities of right, and to consider every man that fails in any part of his duty as without conscience and without merit; unworthy of trust or love, of pity or regard; as an enemy whom all should join to drive out of society, as a pest which all should avoid, or as a weed which all should trample.

It is not but by experience that we are taught the

possibility of retaining some virtues and rejecting others, or of being good or bad to a particular degree. For it is very easy to the solitary reasoner to prove that the same arguments by which the mind is fortified against one crime are of equal force against all; and the consequence very naturally follows, that he whom they fail to move on any occasion has either never considered them, or has, by some fallacy, taught himself to evade their validity; and that, therefore, when a man is known to be guilty of one crime, no farther evidence is needful of his depravity and corruption.

Yet, such is the state of all mortal virtue, that it is always uncertain and variable, sometimes extending to the whole compass of duty, and sometimes shrinking into a narrow space, and fortifying only a few avenues of the heart, while all the rest is left open to the incursions of appetite, or given up to the dominion of wickedness. Nothing, therefore, is more unjust than to judge of man by too short an acquaintance and too slight inspection; for it often happens that, in the loose, and thoughtless, and dissipated, there is a secret radical worth which may shoot out by proper cultivation; that the spark of heaven, though dimmed and obstructed, is not yet extinguished, but may, by the breath of counsel and exhortation, be kindled into flame.

To imagine that every one who is not completely good is irrecoverably abandoned, is to suppose that all are capable of the same degrees of excellence; it is, indeed, to exact from all that perfection which none ever can attain. And since the purest virtue is consistent with some vice, and the virtue of the greatest number with almost an equal proportion of contrary qualities, let none too hastily conclude that all goodness is lost, though it may for a time be clouded and overwhelmed; for most minds are the slaves of external circumstances, and conform to any hand that undertakes to mould them, roll down

any torrent of custom in which they happen to be caught, or bend to any importunity that bears hard against them.

It may be particularly observed of women, that they are, for the most part, good or bad, as they fall among those who practise vice or virtue; and that neither education nor reason gives them much security against the influence of example. Whether it be that they have less courage to stand against opposition, or that their desire of admiration makes them sacrifice their principles to the poor pleasure of worthless praise, it is certain, whatever be the cause, that female goodness seldom keeps its ground against laughter, flattery, or fashion.

For this reason every one should consider himself as intrusted, not only with his own conduct, but with that of others; and as accountable, not only for the duties which he neglects or the crime that he commits, but for that negligence and irregularity which he may encourage or inculcate. Every man, in whatever station, has, or endeavours to have, his followers, admirers, and imitators, and has therefore the influence of his example to watch with care; he ought to avoid not only crimes, but the appearance of crimes; and not only to practise virtue, but to applaud, countenance, and support it. For it is possible that, for want of attention, we may teach others faults from which ourselves are free, or, by a cowardly desertion of a cause which we ourselves approve, may pervert those who fix their eyes upon us, and, having no rule of their own to guide their course, are easily misled by the aberrations of that example which they choose for their direction.

LIFE TOO SHORT TO ALLOW OF THE
WASTE OF TIME.

"True, sir, to live I haste, your pardon give,
For tell me who makes haste enough to live?"

MART.—F. LEWIS's *Trans.*

MANY words and sentences are so frequently heard in the mouths of men, that a superficial observer is inclined to believe that they must contain some primary principle, some great rule of action, which it is proper always to have present to the attention, and by which the use of every hour is to be adjusted. Yet, if we consider the conduct of those sententious philosophers, it will often be found that they repeat these aphorisms merely because they have somewhere heard them, because they have nothing else to say, or because they think veneration gained by such appearances of wisdom; but that no ideas are annexed to the words, and that, according to the old blunder of the followers of Aristotle, their souls are mere pipes or organs, which transmit sounds, but do not understand them.

Of this kind is the well-known and well-attested position that *life is short*, which may be heard among mankind by an attentive auditor many times a day, but which never yet, within my reach of observation, left any impression upon the mind; and perhaps, if my readers will turn their thoughts back upon their old friends, they will find it difficult to call a single man to remembrance who appeared to know that life was short till he was about to lose it.

It is observable that Horace, in his account of the characters of men as they are diversified by the various influences of time, remarks, that the old man is *dilator, spe longus*, given to procrastination, and inclined to extend his hopes to a great distance.

So far are we generally from thinking what we often say of the shortness of life, that, at the time when it is necessarily shortest, we form projects which we delay to execute, indulge such expectations as nothing but a long train of events can gratify, and suffer those passions to gain upon us which are only excusable in the prime of life.

These reflections were lately excited in my mind by an evening's conversation with my friend Prospero, who, at the age of fifty-five, has bought an estate, and is now contriving to dispose and cultivate it with uncommon elegance. His great pleasure is to walk among stately trees, and lie musing in the heat of noon under their shade; he is therefore maturely considering how he shall dispose his walks and his groves, and has at last determined to send for the best plans from Italy, and forbear planting till the next season.

Thus is life trifled away in preparations to do what never can be done, if it be left unattempted till all the requisites which imagination can suggest are gathered together. Where our design terminates only in our own satisfaction, the mistake is of no great importance; for the pleasure of expecting enjoyment is often greater than that of obtaining it, and the completion of almost every wish is found a disappointment; but when many others are interested in an undertaking, when any design is formed in which the improvement or security of mankind is involved, nothing is more unworthy either of wisdom or benevolence than to delay it from time to time, or to forget how much every day that passes over us takes away from our power, and how soon an idle purpose to do an action sinks into a mournful wish that it had once been done.

We are frequently importuned by the bacchanalian writers to lay hold on the present hour, to catch the pleasures within our reach, and remember that futurity is not at our command.

"Soon fades the rose ; once past the fragrant hour,
The loiterer finds a bramble for a flower."

But surely these exhortations may with equal propriety be applied to better purposes ; it may be at least inculcated that pleasures are more safely postponed than virtues, and that greater loss is suffered by missing an opportunity of doing good than an hour of giddy frolic and noisy merriment.

When Baxter had lost a thousand pounds which he had laid up for the erection of a school, he used frequently to mention the misfortune as an incitement to be charitable while God gives the power of bestowing, and considered himself as culpable in some degree for having left a good action in the hands of chance, and suffered his benevolence to be defeated for want of quickness and diligence.

It is lamented by Hearne, the learned antiquary of Oxford, that this general forgetfulness of the fragility of life has remarkably infected the students of monuments and records ; as their employment consists in first collecting, and afterward in arranging or abstracting what libraries afford them, they ought to amass no more than they can digest ; but when they have undertaken a work, they go on searching and transcribing, call for new supplies when they are already overburdened, and at last leave their work unfinished. *It is, says he, the business of a good antiquary, as of a good man, to have mortality always before him.*

Thus, not only in the slumber of sloth, but in the dissipation of ill-directed industry, is the shortness of life generally forgotten. As some men lose their hours in laziness, because they suppose that there is time enough for the reparation of neglect, others busy themselves in providing that no length of life may want employment ; and it often happens that sluggishness and activity are equally surprised by the last summons, and perish not more differently

from each other than the fowl that received the shot in her flight from her that is killed upon the bush.

Among the many improvements made by the last centuries in human knowledge may be numbered the exact calculations of the value of life ; but, whatever may be their use in traffic, they seem very little to have advanced morality. They have hitherto been rather applied to the acquisition of money than of wisdom ; the computer refers none of his calculations to his own tenure, but persists, in contempt of probability, to foretel old age to himself, and believes that he is marked out to reach the utmost verge of human existence, and see thousands and ten thousands fall into the grave.

So deeply is this fallacy rooted in the heart, and so strongly guarded by hope and fear against the approach of reason, that neither science nor experience can shake it, and we act as if life were without end, though we see and confess its uncertainty and shortness.

Divines have, with great strength and ardour, shown the absurdity of delaying reformation and repentance ; a degree of folly, indeed, which sets eternity to hazard. It is the same weakness, in proportion to the importance of the neglect, to transfer any care which now claims our attention to a future time ; we subject ourselves to needless dangers from accidents which early diligence would have obviated, or perplex our minds by vain precautions, and make provision for the execution of designs, of which the opportunity, once missed, never will return.

As he that lives longest lives but a little while, every man may be certain that he has no time to waste. The duties of life are commensurate to its duration, and every day brings its task, which, if neglected, is doubled on the morrow. But he that has already trifled away those months and years in which he should have laboured, must remember that

he has now only a part of that of which the whole is little and that, since the few moments remaining are to be considered as the last trust of Heaven, not one is to be lost.

GOOD-HUMOUR COMMENDED.

“Yet Aristippus every dress became,
In every various change of life the same;
And though he aim'd at things of higher kind,
Yet to the present held an equal mind.”

HOR.—FRANCIS'S *Trans.*

THOSE who exalt themselves into the chair of instruction, without inquiring whether any will submit to their authority, have not sufficiently considered how much of human life passes in little incidents, cursory conversation, slight business, and casual amusements; and therefore they have endeavoured only to inculcate the more awful virtues, without condescending to regard those petty qualities which grow important only by their frequency, and which, though they produce no single acts of heroism, nor astonish us by great events, yet are every moment exerting their influence upon us, and make the draught of life sweet or bitter by imperceptible instillations. They operate unseen and unregarded, as change of air makes us sick or healthy, though we breathe it without attention, and only know the particles that impregnate it by their salutary or malignant effects.

Among these minor endowments is good-humour; which is, in truth, the *balm of being*, the quality to which all that adorns or elevates mankind must owe its power of pleasing. Without good-humour, learning and bravery can only confer that superiority

which swells the heart of the lion in the desert, where he roars without reply and rages without resistance. Without good-humour, virtue may awe by its dignity and amaze by its brightness; but must always be viewed at a distance, and will scarcely gain a friend or attract an imitator.

Good-humour may be defined a habit of being pleased; a constant and perennial softness of manner, easiness of approach, and suavity of disposition; like that which every man perceives in himself when the first transports of new felicity have subsided, and his thoughts are only kept in motion by a slow succession of soft impulses. Good-humour is a state between gayety and unconcern, the act or emanation of a mind at leisure to regard the gratification of another.

It is imagined by many that, whenever they aspire to please, they are required to be merry, and to show the gladness of their souls by flights of pleasantry and bursts of laughter. But, though these men may be for a time heard with applause and admiration, they seldom delight us long. We enjoy them a little, and then retire to easiness and good-humour, as the eye gazes a while on eminence glittering with the sun, but soon turns aching away to verdure and to flowers.

Gayety is to good-humour as animal perfumes to vegetable fragrance; the one overpowers weak spirits, and the other recreates and revives them. Gayety seldom fails to give some pain; the hearers either strain their faculties to accompany its towering, or are left behind in envy and despair. Good-humour boasts no faculties which every one does not believe in his own power, and pleases principally by not offending.

It is well known that the most certain way to give any man pleasure is to persuade him that you receive pleasure from him, to encourage him to freedom and confidence, and to avoid any such ap-

pearance of superiority as may overbear and depress him. We see many that, by this art only, spend their days in the midst of caresses, invitations, and civilities; and, without any extraordinary qualities or attainments, are the universal favourites of both sexes, and certainly find a friend in every place. The darlings of the world will, indeed, be generally found such as excite neither jealousy nor fear, and are not considered as candidates for any eminent degree of reputation, but content themselves with common accomplishments, and endeavour rather to solicit kindness than to raise esteem; therefore, in assemblies and places of resort, it seldom fails to happen that, though at the entrance of some particular person every face brightens with gladness and every hand is extended in salutation, yet if you pursue him beyond the first exchange of civilities, you will find him of very small importance, and only welcome to the company as one by whom all conceive themselves admired, and with whom any one is at liberty to amuse himself when he can find no other auditor or companion; as one with whom all are at ease, who will hear a jest without criticism and a narrative without contradiction, who laughs with every wit and yields to every disputer.

There are many whose vanity always inclines them to associate with those from whom they have no reason to fear mortification; and there are times in which the wise and the knowing are willing to receive praise without the labour of deserving it, in which the most elevated mind is willing to descend, and the most active to be at rest. All, therefore, are at some hour or another fond of companions whom they can entertain upon easy terms, and who will relieve them from solitude without condemning them to vigilance and caution. We are most inclined to love when we have nothing to fear, and he that encourages us to please ourselves will not be long without preference in our affection to those

whose learning holds us at the distance of pupils, or whose wit calls all attention from us, and leaves us without importance and without regard.

It is remarked by Prince Henry, when he sees Falstaff lying on the ground, that *he could have better spared a better man*. He was well acquainted with the vices and follies of him whom he lamented; but while his conviction compelled him to do justice to superior qualities, his tenderness still broke out at the remembrance of Falstaff, of the cheerful companion, the loud buffoon, with whom he had passed his time in all the luxury of idleness, who had gladdened him with unenvied merriment, and whom he could at once enjoy and despise.

You may perhaps think this account of those who are distinguished for their good-humour not very consistent with the praises which I have bestowed upon it. But surely nothing can more evidently show the value of this quality than that it recommends those who are destitute of all other excellences, and procures regard to the trifling, friendship to the worthless, and affection to the dull.

Good-humour is indeed generally degraded by the characters in which it is found; for, being considered as a cheap and vulgar quality, we find it often neglected by those that, having excellences of higher reputation and brighter splendour, perhaps imagine that they have some right to gratify themselves at the expense of others, and are to demand compliance rather than to practise it. It is by some unfortunate mistake that almost all those who have any claim to esteem or love, press their pretensions with too little consideration of others. This mistake, my own interest, as well as my zeal for general happiness, makes me desirous to rectify; for I have a friend who, because he knows his own fidelity and usefulness, is never willing to sink into a comparison: I have a wife, whose beauty first subdued me, and whose wit confirmed her conquest,

out whose beauty now serves no other purpose than to entitle her to tyranny, and whose wit is only used to justify perverseness.

Surely nothing can be more unreasonable than to lose the will to please when we are conscious of the power, or show more cruelty than to choose any kind of influence before that of kindness. He that regards the welfare of others should make his virtue approachable, that it may be loved and copied; and he that considers the want which every man feels, or will feel, of external assistance, must rather wish to be surrounded by those that love him than by those that admire his excellences or solicit his favours; for admiration ceases with novelty, and interest gains its end and retires. A man whose great qualities want the ornament of superficial attractions, is like a naked mountain with mines of gold, which will be frequented only till the treasure is exhausted.

A PEEVISH DISPOSITION TORMENTING TO OURSELVES AND OTHERS.

“For naught tormented, she for naught torments.”

HOR.—ELPHINSTON'S *Trans.*

MEN seldom give pleasure when they are not pleased themselves; it is necessary, therefore, to cultivate an habitual alacrity and cheerfulness, that in whatever state we may be placed by Providence, whether we are appointed to confer or receive benefits, to implore or to afford protection, we may secure the love of those with whom we transact. For though it is generally imagined that he who grants favours may spare any attention to his be-

haviour, and that usefulness will always procure friends, yet it has been found that there is an art of granting requests, an art very difficult of attainment; that officiousness and liberality may be so adulterated as to lose the greater part of their effect; that compliments may provoke, relief may harass, and liberality distress.

No disease of the mind can more fatally disable it from benevolence, the chief duty of social beings, than ill humour or peevishness; for, though it breaks not out in paroxysms of rage, nor bursts into clamour, turbulence, and bloodshed, it wears out happiness by slow corrosion, and small injuries incessantly repeated. It may be considered as the canker of life, that destroys its vigour and checks its improvement, that creeps on with hourly depredations, and taints and vitiates what it cannot consume.

Peevishness, when it has been so far indulged as to outrun the motions of the will, and discover itself without premeditation, is a species of depravity in the highest degree disgusting and offensive, because no rectitude of intention nor softness of address can ensure a moment's exemption from affront and indignity. While we are courting the favour of a peevish man, and exerting ourselves in the most diligent civility, an unlucky syllable displeases, an unheeded circumstance ruffles and exasperates; and in the moment when we congratulate ourselves upon having gained a friend, our endeavours are frustrated at once, and all our assiduity forgotten in the casual tumult of some trifling irritation.

This troublesome impatience is sometimes nothing more than the symptoms of some deeper malady. He that is angry without daring to confess his resentment, or sorrowful without the liberty of telling his grief, is too frequently inclined to give vent to the fermentations of his mind at the first passages that are opened, and to let his passions

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boil over upon those whom accident throws in his way. A painful and tedious course of sickness frequently produces such an alarming apprehension of the least increase of uneasiness as keeps the soul perpetually on the watch, such a restless and incessant solicitude as no care or tenderness can appease, and can only be pacified by the cure of the distemper, and the removal of that pain by which it is excited.

Nearly approaching to this weakness is the captiousness of old age. When the strength is crushed, the senses are dulled, and the common pleasures of life become insipid by repetition, we are willing to impute our uneasiness to causes not wholly out of our own power, and please ourselves with fancying that we suffer by neglect, unkindness, or any other evil which admits a remedy, rather than by the decays of nature, which cannot be prevented or repaired. We therefore revenge our pains upon those on whom we resolve to charge them, and too often drive mankind away at the time we have the greatest need of tenderness and assistance.

But, though peevishness may sometimes claim our compassion, as the consequent or concomitant of misery, it is very often found where nothing can justify or excuse its admission. It is frequently one of the attendants on the prosperous, and is employed by insolence in exacting homage, or by tyranny in harassing subjection. It is the offspring of idleness or pride: of idleness anxious for trifles; or pride unwilling to endure the least obstruction of her wishes. Those who have long lived in solitude, indeed, naturally contract this unsocial quality, because, having long had only themselves to please, they do not readily depart from their own inclinations; their singularities, therefore, are only blameable when they have imprudently or morosely withdrawn themselves from the world; but there

are others who have, without any necessity, nursed up this habit in their minds by making implicit submissiveness the condition of their favour, and suffering none to approach them but those who never speak but to applaud, or move but to obey.

He that gives himself up to his own fancy, and converses with none but such as he hires to lull him on the down of absolute authority, to sooth him with obsequiousness and regale him with flattery, soon grows too slothful for the labour of contest, too tender for the asperity of contradiction, and too delicate for the coarseness of truth; a little opposition offends, a little restraint enrages, and a little difficulty perplexes him; having been accustomed to see everything give way to his humour, he soon forgets his own littleness, and expects to find the world rolling at his beck, and all mankind employed to accommodate and delight him.

Tetrica had a large fortune bequeathed to her by an aunt, which made her very early independent, and placed her in a state of superiority to all about her. Having no superfluity of understanding, she was soon intoxicated by the flatteries of her maid, who informed her that ladies such as she had nothing to do but to take pleasure their own way; that she wanted nothing from others, and had, therefore, no reason to value their opinion; that money was everything; and that they who thought themselves ill-treated should look for better usage among their equals.

Warm with these generous sentiments, Tetrica came forth into the world, in which she endeavoured to force respect by haughtiness of mien and vehemence of language; but, having neither birth, beauty, nor wit in any uncommon degree, she suffered such mortifications from those who thought themselves at liberty to return her insults, as reduced her turbulence to cooler malignity, and taught her to practise her arts of vexation only

where she might hope to tyrannize without resistance. She continued, from her twentieth to her fifty-fifth year, to torment all her inferiors with so much diligence, that she has formed a principle of disapprobation, and finds in every place something to grate her mind and disturb her quiet.

If she takes the air, she is offended with the heat or cold, the glare of the sun or the gloom of the clouds: if she makes a visit, the room in which she is to be received is too light or too dark, or furnished with something which she cannot see without aversion. Her tea is never of the right sort; the figures on the china give her disgust. Where there are children, she hates the gabble of brats; where there are none, she cannot bear a place without some cheerfulness and rattle. If many servants are kept in a house, she never fails to tell how Lord Lavish was ruined by a numerous retinue; if few, she relates the story of a miser who made his company wait on themselves. She quarrelled with one family because she had an unpleasant view from their windows; with another, because the squirrel leaped within two yards of her; and with a third, because she could not bear the noise of the parrot.

Of milliners and mantuamakers she is the proverbial torment. She compels them to alter their work, and then to unmake it, and contrive it after another fashion; then changes her mind, and likes it better as it was at first; then will have a small improvement. Thus she proceeds till no profit can recompense the vexation; they at last leave the clothes at her house and refuse to serve her. Her maid, the only being that can endure her tyranny, professes to take her own course, and hear her mistress talk. Such is the consequence of peevishness; it can be borne only when it is despised.

It sometimes happens that too close an attention to minute exactness, or a too rigorous habit of examining everything by the standard of perfection,

vitiates the temper rather than improves the understanding, and teaches the mind to discern faults with unhappy penetration. It is incident, likewise, to men of vigorous imagination, to please themselves too much with futurities, and to fret because those expectations are disappointed which should never have been formed. Knowledge and genius are often enemies to quiet, by suggesting ideas of excellence which men, and the performances of men, cannot attain. But let no man rashly determine that his unwillingness to be pleased is a proof of understanding, unless his superiority appears from less doubtful evidence; for, though peevishness may sometimes justly boast its descent from learning or from wit, it is much oftener of base extraction, the child of vanity and nursling of ignorance.

INORDINATE SELF-LOVE BLINDS MEN TO THEIR TRUE CHARACTER.

“While mazy error draws mankind astray,
From truth’s sure path each takes his devious way;
One to the right, one to the left recedes,
Alike deluded as each fancy leads.”

HOR.—ELPHINSTON’S *Trans.*

It is easy for every man, whatever be his character with others, to find reasons for esteeming himself, and therefore censure, contempt, or conviction of crimes seldom deprive him of his own favour. Those, indeed, who can see only external facts, may look upon him with abhorrence; but when he calls himself to his own tribunal, he finds every fault, if not absolutely effaced, yet so much palliated by the goodness of his intention and the cogency of the

motive, that very little guilt or turpitude remains. and when he takes a survey of the whole complication of his character, he discovers so many virtues that want but an opportunity to exert themselves in act, and so many kind wishes for universal happiness, that he looks on himself as suffering unjustly under the infamy of single failings, while the general temper of his mind is unknown or unregarded.

It is natural to mean well when only abstracted ideas of virtue are proposed to the mind, and no particular passion turns us aside from rectitude; and so willing is every man to flatter himself, that the difference between approving laws and obeying them is frequently forgotten; he that acknowledges the obligations of morality, and pleases his vanity with enforcing them to others, concludes himself zealous in the cause of virtue, though he has no longer any regard to her precepts than they conform to his own desires, and counts himself among her warmest lovers because he praises her beauty, though every rival steals away his heart.

There are, however, great numbers who have little recourse to the refinements of speculation, but who yet live at peace with themselves by means which require less understanding or less attention. When their hearts are burdened with the consciousness of a crime, instead of seeking for some remedy within themselves, they look round upon the rest of mankind, to find others tainted with the same guilt; they please themselves with observing that they have numbers on their side; and that, though they are hunted out from the society of good men, they are not likely to be condemned to solitude.

It may be observed, perhaps without exception, that none are so industrious to detect wickedness, or so ready to impute it, as they whose crimes are apparent and confessed. They envy an unblemished reputation, and what they envy they are busy to destroy; they are unwilling to suppose themselves

meaner and more corrupt than others, and therefore willingly pull down from their elevations those with whom they cannot rise to an equality. No man yet was ever wicked without secret discontent, and according to the different degrees of remaining virtue or unextinguished reason, he either endeavours to reform himself or corrupt others; either to regain the station which he has quitted, or prevail on others to imitate his defection.

It has always been considered as an alleviation of misery not to suffer alone, even when union and society can contribute nothing to resistance or escape; some comfort of the same kind seems to incite wickedness to seek associates, though indeed another reason may be given; for, as guilt is propagated the power of reproach is diminished, and among numbers equally detestable, every individual may be sheltered from shame, though not from conscience.

Another lenitive by which the throbs of the breast are assuaged, is the contemplation, not of the same, but of different crimes. He that cannot justify himself by his resemblance to others, is ready to try some other expedient, and to inquire what will rise to his advantage from opposition and dissimilitude. He easily finds some faults in every human being, which he weighs against his own, and easily makes them preponderate while he keeps the balance in his own hand, and throws in or takes out at his pleasure circumstances that make them heavier or lighter. He then triumphs in his comparative purity, and sets himself at ease, not because he can refute the charges advanced against him, but because he can censure his accusers with equal justice, and no longer fears the arrows of reproach when he has stored his magazine of malice with weapons equally sharp and equally envenomed.

This practice, though never just, is yet specious and artful when the censure is directed against de-

viations to the contrary extreme. The man who is branded with cowardice may, with some appearance of propriety, turn all his force of argument against a stupid contempt of life and rash precipitation into unnecessary danger. Every recession from temerity is an approach towards cowardice; and though it be confessed that bravery, like other virtues, stands between faults on either hand, yet the place of the middle point may always be disputed; he may therefore often impose upon careless understandings by turning the attention wholly from himself, and keeping it fixed invariably on the opposite fault; and by showing how many evils are avoided by his behaviour, he may conceal for a time those which are incurred.

But vice has not always opportunities or address for such artful subterfuges; men often extenuate their own guilt only by vague and general charges upon others, or endeavour to gain rest to themselves by pointing some other prey to the pursuit of censure.

Every whisper of infamy is industriously circulated, every hint of suspicion eagerly improved, and every failure of conduct joyfully published by those whose interest it is that the eye and voice of the public should be employed on any rather than on themselves.

All these artifices, and a thousand others equally vain and equally despicable, are incited by that conviction of the deformity of wickedness from which none can set himself free, and by an absurd desire to separate the cause from the effects, and to enjoy the profit of crimes without suffering the shame. Men are willing to try all methods of reconciling guilt and quiet, and, when their understandings are stubborn and uncomplying, raise their passions against them, and hope to overpower their own knowledge.

It is generally not so much the desire of men.

sunk into depravity, to deceive the world as themselves; for, when no particular circumstances make them dependant on others, infamy disturbs them little but as it revives their remorse, and is echoed to them from their own hearts. The sentence most dreaded is that of reason and conscience, which they would engage on their side at any price but the labours of duty and the sorrows of repentance. For this purpose every seducement and fallacy is sought; the hopes still rest upon some new experiment till life is at an end; and the last hour steals on unperceived, while the faculties are engaged in resisting reason and repressing the sense of the Divine disapprobation.

THE THOUGHT OF DEATH THE STRONGEST INCENTIVE TO VIRTUE.

“Death only this mysterious truth unfolds,
The mighty soul how small a body holds.”

JUVENAL.—DRYDEN'S *Trans.*

CORPOREAL sensation is known to depend so much upon novelty, that custom takes away from many things their power of giving pleasure or pain. Thus a new dress becomes easy by wearing it, and the palate is reconciled by degrees to dishes which at first disgusted it. That by long habit of carrying a burden, we lose in great part our sensibility of its weight, any man may be convinced by putting on for an hour the armour of our ancestors; for he will scarcely believe that men would have had much inclination to marches and battles, encumbered and oppressed, as he will find himself, with the ancient panoply. Yet the heroes that overrun

regions and stormed towns in iron accoutrements he knows not to have been bigger, and has no reason to imagine them stronger, than the present race of men: he therefore must conclude that their peculiar powers were conferred only by peculiar habits, and that their familiarity with the dress of war enabled them to move in it with ease, vigour, and agility.

Yet it seems to be the condition of our present state, that pain should be more fixed and permanent than pleasure. Uneasiness gives way by slow degrees, and is long before it quits its possession of the sensory; but all our gratifications are volatile, vagrant, and easily dissipated. The fragrance of the jessamine bower is lost after the enjoyment of a few moments, and the Indian wanders among his native spices without any sense of their exhalations. It is, indeed, not necessary to show by many instances what all mankind confess, by an incessant call for variety and restless pursuit of enjoyments, which they value only because unpossessed.

Something similar or analogous may be observed in effects produced immediately upon the mind! nothing can strongly strike or affect us but what is rare or sudden. The most important events, when they become familiar, are no longer considered with wonder or solicitude, and that which at first filled up our whole attention, and left no place for any other thought, is soon thrust aside into some remote repository of the mind, and lies among other lumber of the memory, overlooked and neglected. Thus far the mind resembles the body, but here the similitude is at an end.

The manner in which external force acts upon the body is very little subject to the regulation of the will; no man can at pleasure obtund or invigorate his senses, prolong the agency of any impulse, or continue the presence of any image traced upon the eye, or any sound infused into the ear. But

our ideas are more subjected to choice ; we can call them before us and command their stay, we can facilitate and promote their recurrence, we can either repress their intrusion or hasten their retreat. It is therefore the business of wisdom and virtue to select, among numberless objects striving for our notice, such as may enable us to exalt our reason, extend our views, and secure our happiness. But this choice is to be made with very little regard to rareness or frequency ; for nothing is valuable merely because it is either rare or common, but because it is adapted to some useful purpose, and enables us to supply some deficiency of our nature.

Milton has judiciously represented the father of mankind as seized with horror and astonishment at the sight of death, exhibited to him on the mount of vision. For surely nothing can so much disturb the passions or perplex the intellects of man as the disruption of his union with visible nature ; a separation from all that has hitherto delighted or engaged him ; a change, not only of the place, but the manner of his being ; an entrance into a state not simply which he knows not, but which, perhaps, he has not faculties to know ; an immediate and perceptible communication with the Supreme Being, and, what is above all distressful and alarming, the final sentence and unalterable allotment.

Yet we, to whom the shortness of life has given frequent occasions of contemplating mortality, can, without emotion, see generations of men pass away, and are at leisure to establish modes of sorrow and adjust the ceremonial of death. We can look upon funeral pomp as a common spectacle in which we have no concern, and turn away from it to trifles and amusements without dejection of look or inquietude of heart.

It is, indeed, apparent from the constitution of the world, that there must be a time for other

thoughts ; and a perpetual meditation upon the last hour, however it may become the solitude of a monastery, is inconsistent with many duties of common life. But surely the remembrance of death ought to predominate in our minds as an habitual and settled principle, always operating, though not always perceived ; and our attention should seldom wander so far from our own condition, as not to be recalled and fixed by sight of an event which must soon, we know not how soon, happen likewise to ourselves, and of which, though we cannot appoint the time, we may secure the consequence.

Every instance of death may justly awaken our fears and quicken our vigilance, but its frequency so much weakens its effect, that we are seldom alarmed unless some close connexion is broken, some scheme frustrated, or some hope defeated. Many, therefore, seem to pass on from youth to decrepitude without any reflection on the end of life, because they are wholly involved within themselves, and look on others only as inhabitants of the common earth, without any expectation of receiving good, or intention of bestowing it.

Events, of which we confess the importance, excite little sensibility unless they affect us more nearly than as sharers in the common interest of mankind ; that desire which every man feels of being remembered and lamented, is often mortified when we remark how little concern is caused by the eternal departure even of those who have passed their lives with public honours and been distinguished by extraordinary performances. It is not possible to be regarded with tenderness except by a few. That merit which gives greatness and renown diffuses its influence to a wide compass, but acts weakly on every single breast ; it is placed at a distance from common spectators, and shines like one of the remote stars, of which the light reaches us, but not the heat. The wit, the hero, the philos-

opher, whom their tempers or their fortunes have hindered from intimate relations, die, without any other effect than that of adding a new topic to the conversation of the day. They impress none with any fresh conviction of the fragility of our nature, because none had any particular interest in their lives, or was united to them by a reciprocation of benefits and endearments.

Thus it often happens that those who in their lives were applauded and admired, are laid at last in the ground without the common honour of a stone; because, by those excellences with which many were delighted, none had been obliged, and, though they had many to celebrate, they had none to love them.

Custom so far regulates the sentiments, at least of common minds, that I believe men may be generally observed to grow less tender as they advance in age. He who, when life was new, melted at the loss of every companion, can look in time without concern upon the grave into which his last friend was thrown, and into which himself is ready to fall; not that he is more willing to die than formerly, but that he is more familiar to the death of others, and, therefore, is not alarmed so far as to consider how much nearer he approaches to his end. But this is to submit tamely to the tyranny of accident, and to suffer our reason to lie useless. Every funeral may justly be considered as a summons to prepare for that state, into which it shows us that we must some time enter; and the summons is more loud and piercing, as the event of which it warns us is at less distance. To neglect at any time preparation for death is to sleep on our post at a siege; but to omit it in old age is to sleep at an attack.

It has always appeared to me one of the most striking passages in the visions of Quevedo, which stigmatize those as fools who complain that they

failed of happiness by sudden death. "How," says he, "can death be sudden to a being who always knew that he must die, and that the time of his death was uncertain?"

Since business and gayety are always drawing our attention away from a future state, some admonition is frequently necessary to recall it to our minds; and what can more properly renew the impression than the examples of mortality which every day supplies? The great incentive to virtue is the reflection that we must die; it will therefore be useful to accustom ourselves, whenever we see a funeral, to consider how soon we may be added to the number of those whose probation is past, and whose happiness or misery shall endure for ever.

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